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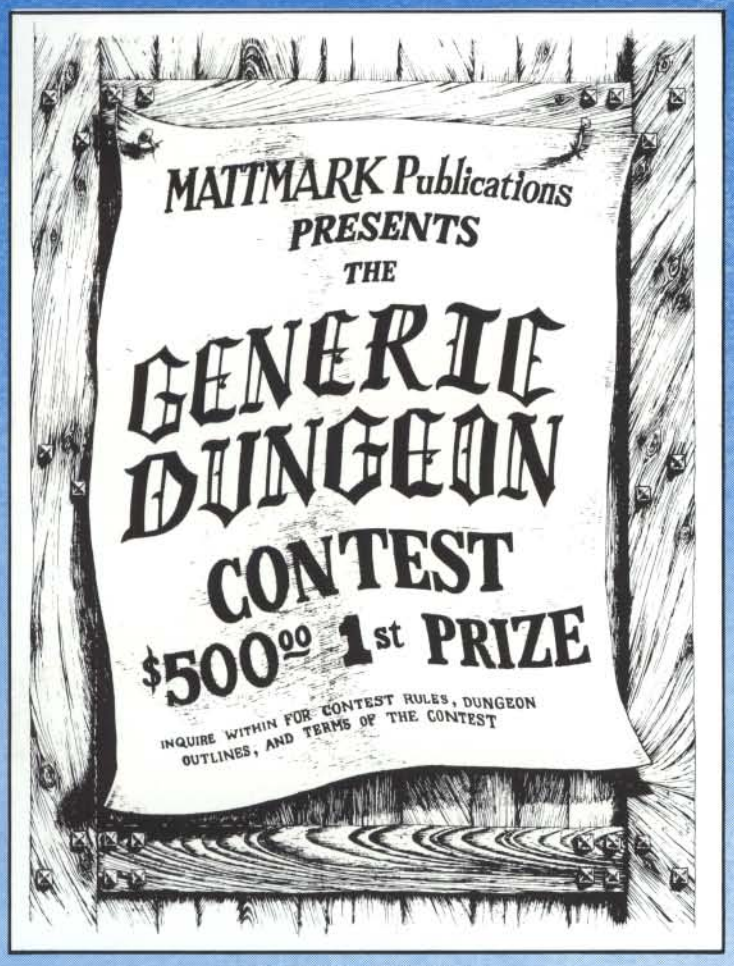

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This month I'm not writing an editorial. I'm letting someone else do it. No, not Mikey. This article is a comparison of three books dealing with gamers. Not all of them are sympathetic treatments. It's a chance for gamers to see themselves as others do. It helps explain why we scare people. See you next month, when I give tips on how to fill out an ineligible Origins awards ballot.

There have been several studies of role-playing games, most of them missing what players regard as the most important points. Here, I shall compare three such studies: one by a sociologist, one by a player, and one by a pair of Biblical

Shared Fantasy: role-playing games as social worlds by Gary Alan Fine. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983. 283 pages.

Through dungeons deep: a fantasy gamers' handbook. by Robert Plamondon. Reston, VA. Reston Publishing Company, Inc., 1982. 323 pages.

Playing with Fire. by John and James Bjornstad. Chicago, Moody Press, 1984. 91 pages. "*Moody Press*, a ministry of the *Moody Bible Institute*."

Each book has, of course, its strengths and weaknesses as a book. Fine, for instance, has written a semi-popular work but demands too much of a lay audience; after five chapters in English, he shifts without warning to jargon in the sixth, then drops back toward (not quite *to*) English in the seventh and eighth. Plamondon, as might be expected, has the best grasp of playing; he manages for the most part to keep players' jargon out of it. Weldon and Bjornstad, though frequently irrational and always presuming the accused guilty until proven innocent, are honest and consistent: they say up front that they believe in demons, and in magic that works; they see when, for instance, their objection to role-playing would apply to drama, and they acknowledge it. Unlike most anti-fantasy, role playing, they know that *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Runequest* are registered trademarks, and that the generic term is fantasy, role playing.

Obviously, such diverse viewers will have such widely differing conclusions on the matter as to fill a book as large as any of them. What startled me on comparing them is that they all miss or nearly miss the same three basic points, which I would have thought from the start. None of them brings out 1. the literary nature of the game, 2. the variegated nature of the gaming community, or 3. the difference between the game and a game system.

A LITERARY GAME

For some reason, that word "fantasy" throws everyone for a loop who tries to talk about Fantasy Role-Playing. English words, after all, usually have more than one definition, and "fantasy" is no exception. One would think that anyone seeing that Role-Playing Games come in three main flavors, and that those flavors are fantasy, science fiction, and historical, would think to ask whether "fantasy" is used in its psychiatric or its literary sense. Still more, one might expect someone who has studied gamemasters at work to notice the similarity in technique to the making of fiction. But no one looking from the outside ever seems to notice this, and even the work in this trio that is by a player fails to emphasize it: the point of RPG is to collaborate in a write-as-you-go adventure story.

Fine, though his sample gaming circle did play occasional science fiction RPG, let the word "fantasy" lead him to think in terms of psychiatric "fantasy": daydreaming, wish-fulfillment, and so on. "After all, in fantasy anything is, by definition, possible. This means that forces that constrain persons to remain within their roles are less evident in fantasy games then they are in more mundane spheres of reality; He then gets himself into complicated explanations of why

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anything and everything does *not* go in FRP, without ever seeing the simple reason: FRP is a literary game, and literary constraints apply. The "fantasy" of Fantasy Role-Playing refers to the literary genre from which it takes most of its inspiration, not to a piece of psychojargon.

Plamondon either hasn't noticed the literary side or takes it for granted. Whatever the case doesn't spell it out. Nor does he refer to it; in explaining why FRP pantheons are *not* blasphemy or irreverence, he never mentions irreverance, he never mentions the multiple pantheons of pulp fantasy and its descendents, nor does he utilize action of fiction in explaining why a rule that slows the action needs plenty of justification.

Weldon and Bjornstad are much the farthest from understanding the literary nature of any game. They are a fair example of what C S. Lewis described in his *Experiment in Criticism* as Vigilants. "They admit no such realm of experience as the aesthetic. There is for them no specifically literary good." He describes "a confusion between life and art, even a failure to allow for the existance of art at all." To Weldon and Bjorstad, everything "teaches" its postulates; everything, including a game, has a "theology". FRP universes are generally polytheistic, therefore FRP must be teaching polytheism; FRP has to give the Bad Guys a fighting chance if the game is to be interesting, therefore FRP must be teaching amorality; et cetera. One strongly suspects that neither of them has ever read heroic fantasy, with its uninhibited proliferation of pantheons; surely they have never gone to a book or a game with the urge to vacation in another skin. As Lewis explicitly states, "The mark of strictly literary reading,... is that we need not believe or approve of logos. ... We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as with our own." All this is lost on Weldon and Bjornstad; they do not want to see with other eyes, and they cannot comprehend the desire in others.

Especially, they cannot comprehend how anyone can vacation in somebody else's head and return happily to one's own, nor how anyone can set out invitations for such a visit and happily wave good-by at the end of it; to them, any visit must be a first step in a permanent move, and any invitation made be aimed toward this. "Since the player and the character are one in thought and decision, to say that something was not really the player's (thoughts of seduction, stealing, or killing) but those of the character is superbly ridiculous. There is only one person involved, and he is both the player and the character. Therefore, it has to be the player's thoughts and decisions." Clearly, they know nothing about method acting, role-playing, or the writing of believable fiction.

A VARIAGATED COMMUNITY

The heterogeneity of the FRP hobby is well represented in the Apa Affair, a controversy mentioned by Fine and clearly in the background of Plamondon's work, but studied by neither. Briefly, one of the Gygaxian tantrums-in-print was against the amateur press associations (apa) which he called "beneath contempt" and "the lowest form of vanity press"; he later claimed that he was trying to get "squared away". Fine quoted his original diatribe and a random sample answer in his text, the later claim in an endnote. Plamondon did not refer specifically to the mater, but in discussing apas he states that they are not a vanity press. Neither Fine nor Plamandon brings out two simple facts: 1. an idea in Alarums and Excursions can literally reach the entire English speaking world without asking leave of E. Gary Gygax; and 2. Gygax constantly sets himself up as the Revealed Master of FRP. In a variegated community like FRP gaming, there can be no such master.

Far too often, Fine speaks as if the gaming circle he studied (a group in Minneapolis/St. Paul) is a representative of the entire hobby; the typical gamer is thus and such, gamers permit thus and do things thus, and so forth. In fact, Fine's description sounds like what might be called the "boys club" type of circle; when a clique of post-pubescent boys get into FRP together, the attitudes of the clique are unlikely to be left behind. This is about what to expect of boys in their late teens and early twenties, but it is *not* representative of RPG gaming circles. Most circles are nowhere near so homogeneous, either in age or gender.

At the time of reading, I assumed that this was a case of professional shorthand. Fine expecting his colleagues to read "the sample of gamers I described here" whenever they run across the shorter phrase. As such, it would be a definite flaw in a popular treatment; even in a semi-popular work, the lay population of the audience should have been introduced to the shorthand the first time it was used. It turns out that I have maybe been too gentle.

Plamondon appears to take the variegated nature of his community for granted. A little reflection on his work makes it fairly clear, but he does not spell it out. Sections like his discussion of changing the rules to suit one's circumstances clearly indicate a heterogeneous hobby, but always by inference. This is perhaps surprising, since his passage on why FRP is not blasphemy shows he is well aware of the rabid attacks on FRp, and a favored approach of such a smear is to find some antisocial group (the one Fine studied would do, in a pinch) and present it as representative of the entire community.

Weldon and Bjornstad, in fact, use just such tactics. "As one college player admits: 'In D&D it's better to

be evil. You get more advantages.'" ("Quoted in Katherine Williams, 'Dungeons and Dragons', *Cornerstone* 9, no. 52:14.") Not a game designer, a magazine editor, or anyone who might be regarded as a spokesman or a long-time observer of the hobby, but a single player held up as an example of the entire community. Some referees do encourage their players to attack without provocation or to backstab each other; they are not admired in the hobby. Weldon and Bjornstad may well have seen a group or groups in which "brute strength and cunning are exalted," but a larger proportion reward group solidarity and common sense.

Predictably, they get into "when a player takes his fantasy role too seriously." Here they offer a large sample. Two people instead of one, relating how they react when a character dies. And this anecdotal, "evidence" drifts in a nameless, dateless, placeless limbo of monolithic stereotypes, isolated from the real, complex and humanly confusing and inconsistant world of people at play.

GAME AND SYSTEM

This distinction seems at first sight miniscule and probably insignificant. To show how it can become significant, I'm going to reverse the alphabet this time; but first, what am I talking about?

Game and game systems are perhaps most closely paralleled by the commercial patterns bought by home dressmakers. What you buy is a set of pattern flimsies in a sturdy envelope; with its aid, you make a tunic or robe or whatever, and this is what you wear. You don't wear the pattern. In addition, there are usually two or three different versions of each basic garment, and you make whichever one you want by using different pieces of the set: for View A, cut the hem on this line, and on this other line for View B; the sleeve pieces go to View C, and so forth. Of course an experienced tailor or seamstress can alter the pattern at every point, but beginners are better advised to stick to the instructions.

Similarly, what a role-player buys is a game system, a set of how- tos for making a game· with this system, you make a game, and you and your friends play that game. You do not play the game system, the printed pamphlet or the guidelines. There are often alternative methods for doing things in the commercial product, only one of which is used in any given game. One at most, I should say, for experienced gamers after the game system at will, substituting a method for doing XXX that they dreamed up themselves, or heard about from a friend of a friend.

Thus, when Weldon and

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Bjornstad say "there appear to be no absolutes and virtually no boundaries", they are confusing game and system. The system has guidelines; the games that players make with the system have rules.

Weldon and Bjornstad are quite wrong in saying, "There are no moral absolutes, nor are there any moral conclusions." What they mean is that each game maker is free to incorporate one's own moral conclusions, unconstrained by the moral views of the game system designer, into one's own game. If the referee has been hassled by bigots, look out for bigoted villians; if the referee likes animals, expect to encounter lots of them, and lay off unless provoked, or you'll pick up some very bad Karma. Moral view is but one part of the total worldview with which each referee infuses one's game world; Middle Ages or far future, Norse or Oriental, shamanic or grimoires--the game world, like the world of a science fiction or fantasy story, is created by the referee, not the game system designer.

Oddly, Weldon and Bjorstad come close without seeming ever to notice. "Much of the moral makeup of FRP games is dependent upon the nature of the particular game and the moral world view of the inventor." In their view, the inventor is not the referee, but the game designer.

Plamondon seems to know this all too well to be conscious of it any more. His discussion on good and bad rules, and how the referee can improve the rules and adapt them, is based on an unstated distinction between game and game system. Unstated it remains, however; so taken for granted that he never explains it.

Fine's discussion of "cheating" and of negotiations among players and between players and referee, is hopelessly complicated for lack of this distinction. The guidelines in the commercial rulebooks are not the rules of the game as played until and unless the referee incorporates them; if the referee changes them, or leaves them out, as Plamondon suggests, that is not cheating, but one of the many decisions involved in drawing up a set of rules for a game. Consider as a parallel a soccer/basketball mixture known as "speedball"; whoever dreamed it up took some rules from each parent game, rejected others, and invented brand new ones to cover things like the transfer from foot dribbling to hand dribbling that never occurs in either parent game. It's no substitute for soccer or for basketball, but neither is it soccer with cheating; it's a different game.

Similarly, negotiations are not for getting around the rules but for adapting them to improve the game. It helps, of course, if both sides agree on what they want from the game; if one side wants loot-and-experience while the other wants gladitorial games, the outcome is likely to be pleasing to neither. When both sides collaborate in the writing of a fiction narrative, both should profit from regular over-haul of the rules.

It's not quite fair to say that Plamondon *misses* these three points. Rather, he is unconscious of them; they are part of the unstated background. I must rate it a minor flaw in *Through Dungeons Deep* that they are never explicitly brought forward and introduced.

With Fine, one must remember that his is a first study. He cannot be expected to know how representative or aberrent his specimen is, until he or his colleagues have sampled more of the population. Common experience would suggest that since the first sample is Midwestern, the next samples come from either coast; and that since the sub-culture has a fairly sophisticated communications network, it can be both a subject of study and a tool.

It would be simple, and in some ways satisfying, to dismiss Weldon and Bjornstad as a couple of Bible-thumping jackasses. When people talk about acidentally contacting real demons or stumbling on real, working, magical spells, and conceed that FRP is "not as sinister as the *Ouija* board, which is actually designed for spiritistic contact" it's hard for rational people to take them seriously. But it's not just role-players who've been rudely wakened to the fact that Bible-thumpers can be serious enemies. No one dares dismiss them nowadays.

So, taking them seriously: 1. Their tangential discussion of acting suggests that they miss not only the literary nature of role-playing games, but literary nature period. They are Lewis' Vigilants to the life, damning literary game players "as if they were doing, essentially, what used to be expected of theologians and philosophers, and the qualities which belong to their works as inventions and as designs are neglected... regard the actual play as primarily a vehicle for that philosophy." Lewis rightly calls this "an outrage to the thing the poet has made for us."

On their failure to allow for the variegated community, I think I may here relax the tight focus I have kept on the matter at hand, and admit to general knowledge of current events. People who never allow differences within their own communities usually paint everyone else as equally intolerant; their picture of the opposition is a monolith opposed to their own monolith, never a variegated community getting along in mutual toleration. The assumption that what any given player they happen to interview says is going to be some sort of official party line is not only bad statistical sampling but blatant pre-judgement.

With such an attitude, they can hardly be expected to see how gamers use the game system. Such free play of invention is not only foreign to them; it seems to be a frequency they can't receive.

Lee Burwasser

Letters To The Editor

Dear Anne,

As one who mourned the brief life of *Game News*, and who watched *VIP of Gaming* from early on, I want to tell you that *SG/FG 77* was worth the wait. It held so many treats that I wanted to write and say 'thank you'. All the convention news is terrific and the Scanner section is wonderful! It's great to find those little snippets of information that are often hard to track down. The game reviews (and ads) are my primary reason for buying magazines about gaming, but what got my attention first in this issue was the Paranoia solo module. I have wanted to try this game since it came out, but I can't find anyone brave (or crazed) enough. Now at least I have sampled the game and want even more to play. Also, I like the amount of space you gave play-by-mail. Once more games become available for our Amiga, I'll probably spend more time with that section. All in all, it's a terrific magazine.

Sincerely,
Linda Woeltjen

Dear Anne,

I am glad that you are publishing again, and believe you have a good magazine with good format and organization.

The GURPS Errata is useful to myself, and I'm sure a great many others, and, also, eventhough I have not, as yet, played any games using ships of the galaxy, I found the article interesting and stimulating.

In short, I found almost all the articles to be interesting in spite of the fact that they presently are not relevent to me as a gamer. However, they (the articles) have stirred my interest in other games that I look forward to playing.

I hope you will emphasize Steve Jackson games since that is the reason I buy the magazine, and want to keep track of his new games. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
T. Robinson

I note two of your Leomund's Secure Shelters in the Jan-Feb 87 Spacegamer/Fantasygamer and enclose my comments.

Conducting the melee has some interesting points. I have always felt that if a mage is hit in the round he is casting a spell before he is able to cast it, he is unable to do so. Indeed, I don't know that I have ever run into anyone who thought differently. Yet, now that you bring it up, I can't find anything in the rules that say other than a mage loses a spell if hit while casting, nothing about being hit before casting.

On the other hand, your rules for attacking a mage during spellcasting not only don't agree with your other rules. You note they don't agree with AD&D rules, they also don't agree with your other rules. You note they give the attacker extra swings which you are at pains to reject elsewhere. They also violate your rule, "Players should not be allowed to hold back their blow or spell awaiting some other action." The rules apply to both monster and player. PCs do attack some mages anyway. So the attacker of a mage must attack only when initiative says, not additional attacks, not waiting to attack.

Your melee system is interesting, but it is rather complex. We not only have initiative for each individual, but that initiative must be varied by a random factor each round. That can be a lot of extra rolling. I'm not sure it's worth it. Party initiative is much easier and often inadequate.

On death by bleeding, we have been using a different system, death when the minus exceeds 2d6, from 3 to 13. This is a bit rougher on the player, but it is popular enough at the moment and does better simulate the need for immediate attention.

Weapons vs Armor Type. This is a part of AD&D few use (we tried it for awhile and eventually just abandoned it.), but a few points. Magic armor is still armor of that class with all its disadvantages and advantages over other types. Thus magic armor still suffers the minus when that is the case for regular armor.

If armor type adjustments are to be used, we do need to classify each monster as an armor type. (I would imagine most should be rated as leather.) This would have the side benefit of allowing us to differ the monsters more. For example, a monster rated AC5 due to its speed and one rated AC5 due to its tough skin should be treated differently. I have suggested that monster armor classes be written AC8 + 3 (leather with bonus of + 3 due to quickness or other factors probably noted in text.)

Wisdom spell bonus of nonclerics. I rather prefer it your way, but the players' handbook table says, "Clerics" (and subclasses thereof). Rangers, etc. would seem to be out of luck.

Two weapons. Your idea of applying the non-profieiency penalty to the second weapon sounds good. Of course, that means the PC should be able to use as a weapon profiency, learning how to use two weapons. However, there would appear to be no reason a mage couldn't learn to use two daggers at once.

Experience and Training: Nearly anything is better than the current system and you seem to have a good system here, which I intend to adopt in part. Still, a few points:

While payment now in cash should be the normal rule, (the typical PC is not a good credit risk) there will be good reasons to make exceptions. Pay by services is often a good way to start a module, particularly one the party is a tad weak for and needs training

improvements to go into. Note too, that this makes difficulties when PC trains PC. In such a case, training ought to cost about half as much (equipment used up in training, etc.), but otherwise be left to the PCs to price.

While it is clear that we don't want someone to bound up several levels due to training to gain experience, it seems a little severe to say the maximum gain is half a level and that only if you train precisely at the midpoint. The rules envision the gain of nearly two levels in one adventure. An alternate to requiring the PC be half the way to the next level: Allow training at any time, but the training must be followed by an equal amount of experience on the field before additional training can add more experience. This would put a maximum of about 2/3 gain from money vs 1/3 battle. Griswald, our fighter, could train from 4001 to 8001 in one shot if he desired, but then he would have to gain 4000ep before he could train again.

Of course, Griswald could train for less than a level if he wanted to. This would allow training at the convenience of the party, not some arbitrary point that might interrupt play too seriously.

The Penalty. Why is this here at all? If we simply say the PC gains 'X' experience in a full day, there is no way for the PC to change that thus, no need for a penalty. If we are to have a penalty, we must have a bonus as well, say gain experience on an hourly basis, not daily.

Special tasks or skills: Requiring separate training for each skill makes it hard on the character with a variety of specials. It really might be better to assume these are part of the regular training for that class. However, the immediate point at the moment is that you failed to mention the price for this training. For regular training, you give a price of one gp per ep, but what do the specials cost?

Robbing or killing the teacher, why bring in the gods? The teacher is by definition superior to the student in major degree. Presumably, the teacher trains at his location where he knows where everything is, and can put up his best defense, as if he needs it when he is already a superior. If a third level student tried to take on a sixth level teacher, the teacher should wipe him with no trouble. If the PC wants to try it, you don't need to include any gods, just the teacher's natural superiority plus his choice of grounds. Word of this gets out, and you will have a minimal chance of ever getting another teacher. You don't need gods for something like this.

All in all an interesting article. Hope to be reading more of your stuff.

Yours for deeper dungeons,
David Carl Argall
La Puente, CA

I just received my copy of the new *Space Gamer/Fantasy Gamer* and am distressed to find that many of the problems with the *VIP of Gaming* are still a part of DTI's magazine production processes. I think that the *SG/FG* has shown marked aesthetic improvement over its predessor, but many contextual problems continue to plague a potentually fine production.

First, I wish to point out that a great deal of space is wasted on many pages. A two centimeter top margin appears uniformly on each page, but is often supplemented by an additional three and one-half centimeters between the top margin line and the top of the text itself. One might suggest that cleaning up this space could make the magazine appear oppressive and busy.

Second, the number of errors found on a page is, in my opinion, quite excessive.

Third. I would like to think that there is enough material to publish the magazine in a 64 page format. If it is the case that such material is not available, advise me, and I may start dumping telephone books in your post office box.

Finally, I never liked ragged-right margins. I think that all text should be justified to both margins. I don't think that this will pose a problem with the typeface you are using. I think that it is sufficiently small to facilitate double justification and not spread out the letters in an obnoxious fashion.

Let's end on a positive note. The layout and graphics look great. Also, the quality of the material itself has improved. No feature in issue #77 was of questionable value. If the articles which appeared in #77 are any indication of what is to come, then I look forward to seeing issue #78.

Cordially,
Michael L. A. Anderson

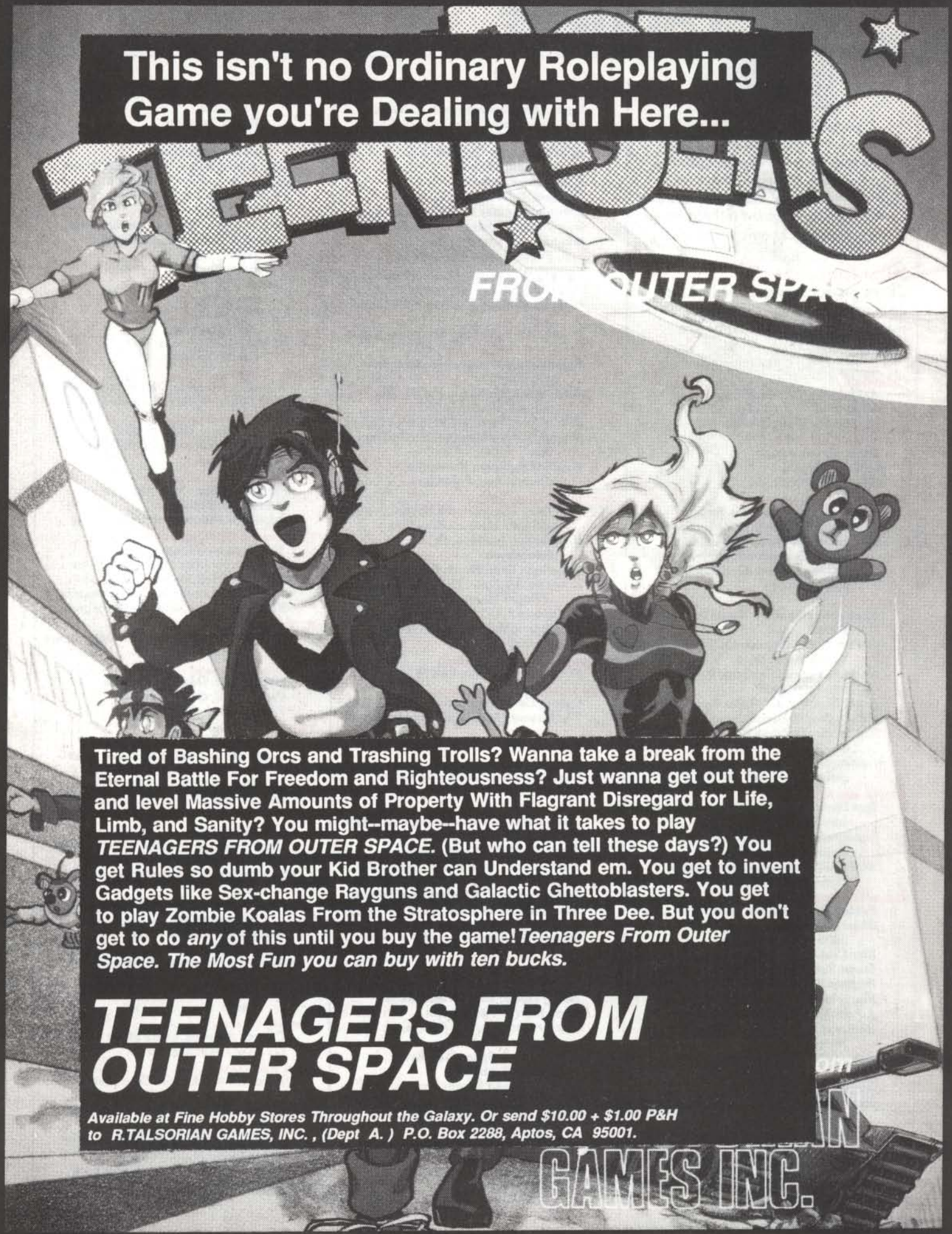
Thanks for your comments. Some of the "problems" you list are choices we make when establishing the look and feel of the magazine, ragged-right margins, and border space, for example. We simply disagree. We strive for a perfect page every time and every issue. However, this cannot always be done.

I'm always pleased when readers "out there" notice the physical qualities and "aesthetics" of a magazine. Layout and design should be as invisible as possible, so the reader is drawn into the article naturally, or so he thinks. Art directors play with the subconscious when designing a publication. White space (sometimes called "wasted space") page margins and ragged right type all contribute to give a page a more open, less rigid "feel". A casual reader is more apt to start reading an article in that format than one that is more "type heavy" (i.e. oppressive).

Next time you're thumbing through magazines in a store, see which ones you start reading on the spot. Chances are, it will be organized in a more open style. This is a major concern with all magazines. How to convince the potential buyer to pick up the magazine, convince him that it'll be fun and easy to read and get him to take it home.

Balanced with this, is the need to provide the regular reader with the maximum "bang for his buck!" We hope we're doing that and we will try to continue meeting both requirements in the future. The more "new" people we bring in to the magazine, the bigger and better SPACE GAMER/FANTASY GAMER can become.

Thanks for your comments.
Vince DeNardo
Art Director


This isn't no Ordinary Roleplaying Game you're Dealing with Here...
TEENAGERS
FROM OUTER SPACE
Tired of Bashing Orcs and Trashing Trolls? Wanna take a break from the Eternal Battle For Freedom and Righteousness? Just wanna get out there and level Massive Amounts of Property With Flagrant Disregard for Life, Limb, and Sanity? You might--maybe--have what it takes to play TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE. (But who can tell these days?) You get Rules so dumb your Kid Brother can Understand em. You get to invent Gadgets like Sex-change Rayguns and Galactic Ghettoblasters. You get to play Zombie Koalas From the Stratosphere in Three Dee. But you don't get to do any of this until you buy the game! Teenagers From Outer Space. The Most Fun you can buy with ten bucks.
TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE
Available at Fine Hobby Stores Throughout the Galaxy. Or send $10.00 + $1.00 P&H to R.TALSORIAN GAMES, INC., (Dept A.) P.O. Box 2288, Aptos, CA 95001.
GAMES INC.

This is the place to discover what's new in gaming products. There will be a list of scheduled releases from the manufacturers. Short write-ups of new products and events will be included to help make your gaming more enjoyable.

New Releases

These products are scheduled for July and August of 1987. Last minute changes and delays are possible.

Chaosium
- *Arkham Horror*, boardgame
- *Miskatonic U. Kit*, Cthulhu Kit
- *Investigator's Kit*, Cthulhu Kit

Columbia Games, Inc.
- *Kiraz*, Harnmaster
- *Ibanvaal*, Ivania
- *Shorkyne*, Ivinia

Fantasy Games Unlimited
- *Skully's Harbor*, Lejentia Book
- *City State*, Aftermath campaign pack
- *For the Greater Good*, Villians & Vigilantes adventure
- *Seldin Compendium #3*, Space Opera supplement

FASA Corp
- *The Succession Wars*, BattleTech board game
- *Stiener, Lyran Commonwealth*, BattleTech house gazeteer
- *Kurita, Draconis Combine*, BattleTech house gazeteer
- *BattleTech Manual*, Rules Compendium
- *Orions*, Star Trek rules supplement
- *The Strider Incident*, Regula deck plans Star Trek adventure
- *Interceptor*, Renegade Legion board game

Electronic Arts
- *Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future*, Commodore 64/128
- *Legacy of the Ancients*, Commodore 64, Apple II
- *EOS Earth Orbit Stations*, Apple II, Commodore 64/128

Game Designers' Workshop
- *Pentapods*, Traveller: 2300
- *Ships of the French Arm*, Traveller: 2300
- *Star Cruiser*, Traveller: 2300
- *Soviet Vehicle Guide*, Twilight: 2300
- *Regatta*, Traveller
- *Player's Handbook*, MegaTraveller
- *Air Strike*, Air Superiority Series
- *Battles of the Third World War*, Harpoon
- *Johnny Reb (2nd Edition)*

Games Workshop US
- *Blood Royal*, board game
- *Man Mangler*, Machinerie of Destruction
- *Elf Attack Chariot*, Machinerie of Destruction
- *Belrog, Encounter at Khadzad-Dum*, Lord of the Rings boxed set
- *Daleks & Cybermen*, Citadel

Grenadier Models, Inc.
- *Ogres Lair*, Fantasy Lords boxed set
- *Ranger in Plate*, Julie Gutherie line
- *Adventuring Thief*, Julie Gutherie line
- Illusionist, Julie Gutherie line
- *Royal Knight*, Julie Gutherie line
- *Evil Warrior*, Julie Gutherie line
- *Princess*, Julie Gutherie line
- *Amazon*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpacks
- *Iron Gollem*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpacks
- *Mounted and Standing Clerics*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpacks
- *Liche Giant*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpacks
- *Slaw Dragon*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpack
- *Oriental Artillery*, Fantasy Lord Blisterpack
- *Drunken Dragon Inn*, Encounter Series

Iron Crown Enterprises
- *Beyond the Core*, Space Master campaign pack
- *Lords of Middle Earth, Vol. II: The Mannish Races*, MERP
- *Ents of Fanghorn*, MERP campaign
- *Brigands of Mirkwood*, MERP adventure
- *Wrath of the Seven Horsemen*, Champions adventure

Mayfair Games, Inc.
- *Mad Rook's Gambit*, DC Heroes Legion of Super-Heroes adventure
- *Hardware Handbook*, DC Heroes sourcebook
- *Superman Sourcebook*, DC Heroes
- *Kings for All Time*, DC Heroes Legion of Super-Heroes adventure
- *Watchman 2*, DC Heroes
- *City State of the Invincible Overlord*, fantasy world

Micropose Software, Inc.
- *Pirates*, Commodore 64/128

New Infinities Productions, Inc.
- *Cyborg Commando*, role-playing game
- *The Haunted Mine*, Fantasy Master adventure
- *Baldemar: A Town*, Fantasy Master setting
- *Castle Crestwood*, Fantasy Master setting

Nova Game Designs, Inc.
- *ShadowHawk*, BattleTech game books
- *Griffin*, BattleTech game books
- *Wasp*, BattleTech game book
- *WarHammer*, BattleTech game book

Palladium Books
- *Southern Cross*, Robotech supplement
- *Adventure on the High Seas*, The Palladium Role-playing Game Book III
- *Heroes Unlimited Revised*

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
- *Hydra*, Boxed figure
- *Medium Lance*, BattleTech Mechs
- *Heavy Lance*, BattleTech Mechs
- *Mech Warrior*, Boxed sets
- *Stiener Mech Warrior figures*, Battle Tech line
- *Stiener Air & Space Pilot figure* Battle Tech line
- *Stiener Ground Troops figures*, Battle Tech line
- *Stiener Security Police figures*, Battle Tech line
- *Kurita Mech Warrior figures*, Battle Tech line
- *Kurita Ground Troops figures*, Battle Tech line
- *Kurita Special Forces Death Squad Assassins*, Battle Tech line
- *Kurita Mech Tech figure*, Battle Tech line
- *Chaos Wars Rules*, Rules with figures
- *Ninja*, Three-stage character
- *Female Magic User*, Three-stage character
- *Witch Doctor*, Three-stage character
- *Drow Elf*, Three-stage character
- *VejagerMech JM6-S*, BattleTech line
- *Stalker STK-3F* BattleTech line
- *CP 10-Z Cyclops*, BattleTech line
- *HCT-3F Hatchetman*, BattleTech line

Sir-Tech Software, Inc.
- *Wizardry: Knight of Diamonds*, IBM
- *Deep Space*, Apple II, Commodore 64

Steve Jackson Games, Inc.
- *GURPS Space*, GURPS rulebook
- *Humanx Commonwealth*, GURPS worldbook

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
- *President Elect - 1988 Edition*
- *B-24*, flight simulator
- *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons line*

The Avalon Hill Game Company
- *TV Wars*, boardgame
- *Quest for the Ideal Mate*, boardgame
- *Hedgerow Hell*, Deluxe Advanced Squad Leader /E, F, G, H boards.
- *Raid on Nazaire*, solitaire board game

R. Talsorian Games, Inc.
- *Field Trip*, Teenagers From Outer Space Adventure

Task Force Games
- *Citybook III: Deadly Nightside*
- *Citybook IV: On the Road*
- *The Crossover Chronicles*

TSR, Inc.
- *In Search of Adventure*, B1-9, D&D
- *Duchy of Ten*, D&D Blackmoor Adventure
- *The Bloodstone Wars*, AD&D adventure
- *Manual of the Planes*, AD&D Rule Book
- *The X Potential*, Marvel Super Heroes campaign
- *One Thing After Another*, Marvel Super Heroes Gamebook #5
- *The Emirate of Ylaruam*, D&D Gazetteer
- *The AD & D Forgotten Realms*, adventure set
- *Blood of the Yakuza*, AD&D Oriental adventure
- *The Delta Fragment*, Gamma World adventure
- *Top Secret Espionage*, Role-playing game

Victory Games, Inc.
- *Central America*, board game
- *G I Jane 1988 calendar*

West End Games, Inc.
- *Paranoia 2nd Edition Boxed Set*
- *Paranoia 2nd Edition Book*
- *Paranoia Excessory Pack, Paranoia*

The City State of the Invincible Overlord, scheduled for release by *Mayfair Games* is a new, totally revised and much expanded

version of the former *Judges Guild* product. The product will be a boxed edition and feature a four-color map.

New *Europa* play aids from *Games Research/Design* are **Kit 4: Scorched Earth** and **Kit 5: Spain**. On the way, EBM, Europa by Mail, and the Europa Players' Association. Games Research/Design, PO Box 591, Grinnell, IA 50112.

The Bard's Tale is the first game title released for the Apple IIGS by Electronic Arts. If you're stumped with **Bard's Tale II: The Destiny Knight**, help is on the way, for $12.95 the cluebook can be your. You can even order it directly, (800) 245-4525, (800) 562-1112 in California.

Electronic Arts established the Adventure Construction Set Fan Club. If you're interested in information write: Ken St. Andre, ACS Fan Club, 3421 East Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. announced five conversions for the IBM, **Roadwar: 2000, Rings of Zilfin, Shard of Spring, Phantasie** and **Wizard's Crown**. In addition, **Roadwar: 2000** is available for Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, and MacIntosh.

In case you hadn't noticed, Fantasy Games Unlimited moved to Arizona. New address PO Box 1082, Gilbert, AZ 85234.

Emprise Game Systems announce the release of its play by mail game, **Warp Force Empires**. The game features a communication system called CorGaSyl (Correspondence Gamers Symbolic Language). Future products include **Assassin's Quest** and **Galactic Imperium.**

West End Games announced the **Star Wars** role-playing game will be released in October.

All right all you patriotic Americans, your role-playing game is here! **Kill the Commie Bastards** by Paul Lidberg is available for $3 from Crunchy Frog Enterprises, c/o Paul Lidberg, 12520 Lakewood Blvd., #A37, Downey, CA 90242. Coming soon from the land where the frogs fly free, **Big Business, Comet Kids** and **Ribbitech.**

Talk about a contest you don't want to win. The Avalon Hill Game Company is sponsoring a contest to publicize their new game, **The Quest for the Ideal Mate.** Entrants are asked to submit their mates most detestable character traits.

Steve Jackson Games, Inc. announced three new licenses. The first is the role-playing and boardgame license for Conan. Products planned in the Hyborian Age are a Conan solo adventure and a worldbook, both for GURPS. The second license is for the **Horseclans** series by Robert Adams. A Horseclans worldbook is planned for late summer. The third license is for **Isaac Asimov presents the Star Traders**. It's a boardgame of travel and trade where the players vie to be the Imperial Trader. Look for it around Christmas.

Mattmark Publications is sponsoring a generic dungeon contest with a first prize of $500. For more info, write Mattmark Publications 664 Airbrake Avenue, Wilmerding, PA 15148.

Berkley Publishing Group announced a series of books entitled Combat Command that are tactical, military role-playing games in the worlds of well-known science fiction writers. The first book, *Cut by Emerald*, by Dana Kramer is set in the world of Piers Anthony's *Bio of a Space Tyrant*. There are plans for books set in the worlds of Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* and Roger Zelazny's *Amber*.

Schubel & Son Inc. announced price reductions on their fully computerized play by mail games, Alian Conflict, Arena Combat, and Computer Boxing. These games are now $1 per turn. Schubel & Son, PO Box 214848, Sacramento, CA 95821.

In addition to the products listed above, New Infinities Productions, Inc. announced plans for two board games. *Mertwig's Maze* fantasy game and *Asteroid Miners* science fiction game. Joining the product line-up are *Gord the Rogue Fantasy Action-Adventure Books*.

Harn Fans there is now a quarterly publication devoted to the world of Harn. *Harnlore* will be printed in February, May, August, and November. For more info write, Columbia Games, Box 581, 810 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5C 4C9, Canada.

A Traveller role-playing play by mail game is offered by W E J Hinton, Jr. He also edits a newsletter, *The Travellers Aide*, and will be taking over another monthly newsletter called the *Imperium Staple*. For more info, write W E J Hinton, Jr., 20 Almont St., Nashua, NH 03060.

Quest Games, Inc. announced a new play by mail game *Tactical Assault Group*. The game is computer run with up to 60 players per game with each player having another player as their target. If this tweaks your paranoia, write Quest Games, Inc., PO Box 610, Oakland, NJ 07436.

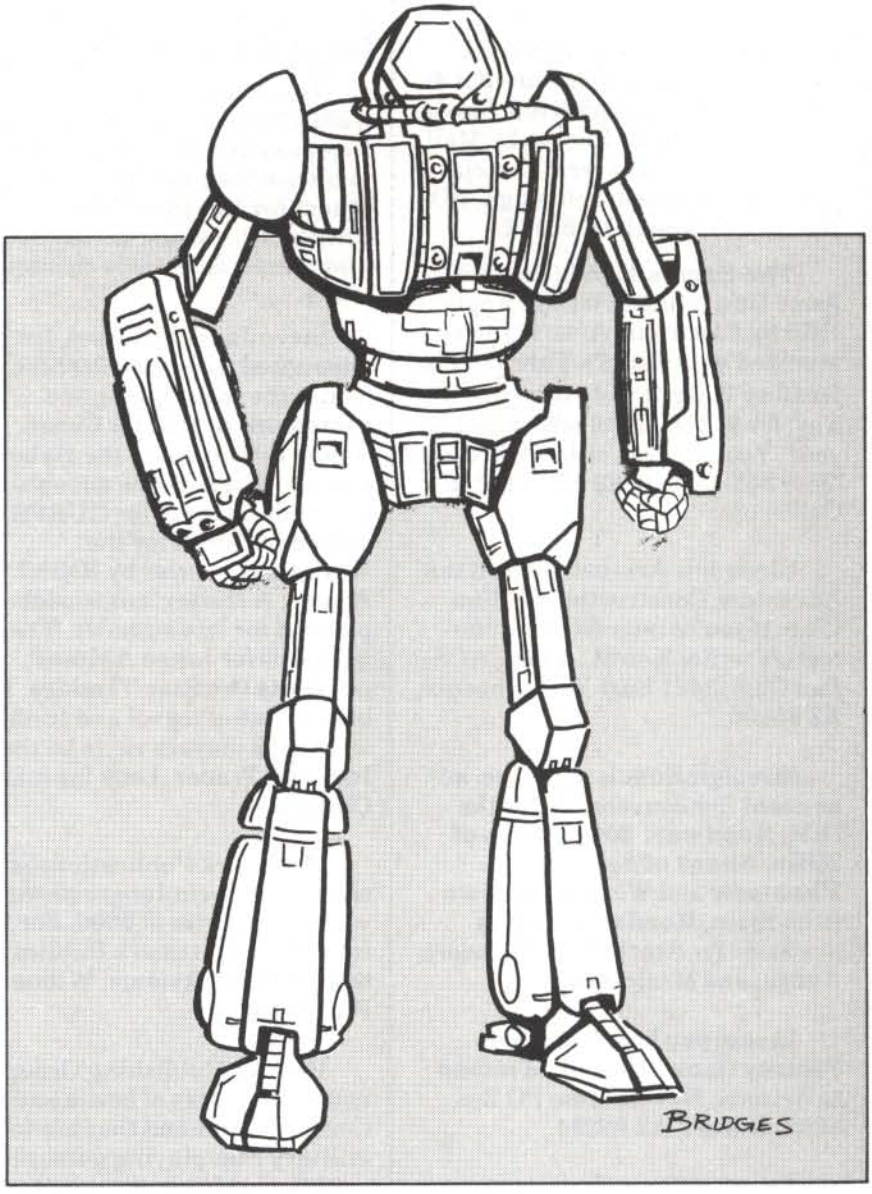
Game Designers' Workshop announced the following. *Advanced Traveller Combat* will be out this year. *Twilight: 2000* will have several adventures set around the Caribbean island of Grenada. And, there is a scenario booklet in the works for *Johnny Reb*.

Games Workshop US will be moving to Chicago this summer. They also announced two new lines for American customers, The European Range and the European Import Range. The European Range is an expansion of the Citadel Collector Series. The European Import Range will include every release from Citadel. Now you can get it if you saw it in the White Dwarf. Also available is *Heroes for Wargames* a complete guide to owning, painting, and house training fantasy and science fiction miniatures.

Technical Data Readout

CST-3S Cestus Type Heavy BattleMech

by Dale Kemper



Mass: 65 tons
Chassis: Technicron Type B (Modified)
Power Plant: Magna 260
Cruising Speed: 46.7 Km/hr.
Maximum Speed: 62.6 Km/hr.
Jump Jets: Rawlings 55
Jump Capacity: 120 meters
Armor: Rigid TBC, Type II
Armament: Two Linblad Long Range Auto Cannons, Two Diverse Optics Type 15 Medium Lasers, Two Halberd VI Long Range Missle Five Packs
Main Manufacturer: Technicron Manufacturing
Communications System: AllComm 250
Targeting & Tracking System: Chichester ASR-14

Type: CST-3S Cestus

		Tons
Tonnage: 65 Tons		65
Internal Structure:		6.5
Engine:	260 Magna	13.5
Walking MPs:	4	
Running MPs:	6	
Jumping MPs:	4	
Heat Sinks:	12	2
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	208	13

BATTLETECH Game Stats

	Int. Structure	Armor Value
Head:	3	9
Center Torso:	21	35/8
Rt./Lt. Torso:	15	24/6
Rt./Lt. Arm:	10	20
Rt./Lt. Leg:	14	28

Weapons And Ammo:

Type	Loc.	Critical	
AC/2	RA	3	6
Ammo (AC) 45	RA	1	1
AC/2	LA	3	6
Ammo (AC) 45	LA	1	1
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
LRM 5	RT	1	2
Ammo (LRM) 24	RT	1	1
LRM 5	LT	1	2
Ammo (LRM) 24	LT	1	1

The CST-3S Cestus Type Heavy BattleMech is one of the older heavy Mech vehicles remaining in the Succession States' forces. First produced in 2555 A.D., the Cestus was very popular in the glory days of the old Star League. Approximately 100,000 of these Mechs were constructed before the beginning of the Succession Wars. Only 5% remain in operation today, mainly due to the serious lack of spare parts and components. Currently, the House of Steiner is fabricating new components for the Cestus but

the other Successor States seem to be phasing out the Mech for newer, more available types.

The Cestus was designed for long range support of heavy assaults and was usually assigned directly to the assault lances in a Mech regiment. Occasionally this organizational method was modified with the Cestus assigned to a support lance. With its extensive array of long range weapons and heavy armor the Cestus had the staying power necessary in large scale Mech engagements.

CAPABILITIES

The Cestus Type Heavy BattleMech is very useful in its designed role. It's long range armament consists of double arm mounted Linblad Long Range Auto Cannon and torso-mounted Halberd VI Long Range Missile Five Packs. This combination gives the Cestus a hard hitting capability at extremely long ranges that even today's newest Mechs have trouble countering. Arm mounted double Diverse Optics Type 15 Medium Lasers also give the Mech an offensive weapon effective at short and medium ranges.

The Cestus has average maneuverability for a heavy Mech. It does, however, have an advantage over most large Mechs in its jump capability. Its twin Rawlings 55 Jump Jets enabled many of these vehicles to take advantage of a tactical situation or escape from one that has turned sour. With its additional heat sinks installed. The Cestus still retains most of its offensive capability even during jump jet operations.

BATTLE HISTORY

During the First Succession War the numerous Cestus type BattleMechs were part of all front line forces of the Successor States. Because of this their losses were quite high. During the occupation of Malory by House Kurita forces every Cestus type Mech in the ten invading regiments was either disabled or destroyed in all out fighting against the House Davion defenders. By the Second Succession War the number of operational Cestus type Mechs had dropped dramatically. The surviving units were usually used for long range support and rarely got into heavy combat situations.

More recently, during the Battle of Ellison in 3015 A.D. a support lance of the House Davion invaders composed mainly of Cestus type Mechs was forced to defend against an intensive counterattack by House Laio defenders. With the attackers charging through thickly forested terrain the long range capability of the Cestus was made impotent and they were forced to fight at a disadvantage closer in. Within a few minutes the Davion support lance was overwhelmed by a reinforced lance of Laio medium Mechs. The entire House Davion invasion group was forced to fall back and regroup, giving the House of Laio one of its rare glimpses of victory.

VARIANTS

The most prominant variant of the Cestus involves the removal of the jump jet machinery, the additional heat sinks, and two tons of armor so that Long Range Missile 10-packs can replace the 5-packs installed in the left and right torso of the standard model. Although creating an ammunition problem (the Cestus Type Mech's missile storage lockers are very difficult to increase in size) this variant increases the long range hitting power of the Mech while sacrificing some of its defensive ability. It is felt that if the Cestus is used in the long range support role as designed most of the defensive components will not be necessary since they won't be involved in heavy combat situations.

NOTABLE USERS

During the withdrawal of Kurita forces from the planet Sanderson in 2963 A.D. MechWarrior Regie Nogales and his Cestus "Bad Boy III" were listed as missing, presumed lost by the commander of the 4th Galedon Regulars. This was not the case, however. Nogales' Mech had sustained considerable head damage which had knocked the pilot unconscious and destroyed all of "Bad Boy III's" directional antennae for the communication system. When the last Kurita DropShip lifted off, Nogales was just coming around in a deep gully some twenty kliks away. When he tried to reach the now empty landing zone, Nogales was immediately spotted by Davion forces and the chase began.

Using his long range weapons to good effect, Nogales attempted to evade the pursuing lance and find time to rig a replacement antennae. With the broken and rough terrain he was able to use his jump jets to good effect keeping any faster enemy scouts from getting near enough to use their long range weapons. Finally, Nogales was able to contact the ships of the Kurita raiding force just before they left orbit and headed for their JumpShip. A flight of AeroSpace fighters was dispatched to support him and the small LEOPARD Class DropShip TAYATUMO MARU detached to pick him up to rejoin his unit and receive the Order of Dracone, Second Class for his excellent tactics.

PLEASE NOTE! Ral Partha Enterprises offers a fine scale model of the CST-3S Cestus in their extensive BATTLETECH miniatures line (Catalog Number 20-814). Check them out at your local gaming supply store.

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COPS AND COMMIES

HIL Sector Blues: A Campaign Pack for Paranoia
Published by: West End Games
Designed by: Ken Rolston
Developers: Bill Slavicsek & Martin Wixted
Price: $10
Complexity level: Low
Rules clarity: Good
Graphics quality: Good
Reviewed by: J. Michael Caparula

What's this? a campaign supplement for *Paranoia*? How can a GM even think of running a campaign in a game where PC's barely survive a single adventure? Has *Paranoia* kicked the food vat and gone to the Great Dungeon in the Sky?

Actually, *HIL Sector Blues* does allow a plausible *Paranoia* campaign with some major distinctions from your average *Paranoia* bloodbath. The PC's aren't RED-level Troubleshooter peons anymore, but BLUE-level Internal Security Troopers, with nifty armor, squad cars and everything. Also, the usual cutthroat inter-player suspicion and treachery is toned down a bit to more subtle forms of backstabbing. The question that must be answered by prospective buyers is whether they **want** to run a campaign-style game of *Paranoia*.

The 54 page *HIL Sector Blues* is a grab bag of *Paranoia* offerings. Most of the book describes the HIL Sector of Alpha Complex, a sort of futuristic East LA ("There are a hundred stories in the naked sector..."), and the types of situations IntSec is likely to encounter there. The GM is provided with material on designing adventures in this area by utilizing running gans. These include muddled communication and tube-transport systems, the bloated bureaucracy of IntSec, a lethal express courier service, and a gaggle of innocent bystanders, many recognizable from previous *Paranoia* outings. The players get pre-generated IntSec BLUE Troopers and a copy of HIL Sector Internal Security Gazette, which contains everything (ahem...) they need to know about their glamorous and exciting new jobs. The three adventures provided prove that campaign play can still be hilarious fun, but I could do without the overhanded presence of pop-culture icons in "First Blood and Then Some". The *Paranoia* environment is humorous enough without having to resort to MAD magazine style parody.

In addition to the HIL Sector stuff, the lucky customer is treated to a couple of pages of West End's new "Cardstock Commies". These neat little things are kind of fun, especially the cut out autocars and computer terminals. And to go along with all these new toys are... get this... official *Paranoia* miniature rules! Now you can have hours of fun and cheap laughs turning your whole house into a subsector of Alpha Complex, wishing you hadn't got rid of your old Matchbox cars.

In the end, this mixed bag is just that, a mixed bag. The figures and miniature rules are just the ticket to lend more drama to *Paranoia*'s dramatic combat system. I can take or leave the campaign material; I may incorporate some of it into play, and I may run BLUE IntSec PC's once... maybe twice. I personally prefer the destructive Machiavellian atmosphere of RED-level play. Besides, we can't let our players get *too* cocky, can we? Next thing you know they'll want to be High Programmers.

MEKTON THE GAME OF JAPANESE ROBOT COMBAT

Published by: R. Talsorian Games
Price: $14.00
Reviewed by: David Jacobs

Oboy, This is fun stuff! The book is divided into three parts: (1) Mekton construction and combat, (2) Mekton roleplaying system, and (3) Algol sourcebook.

Mekton construction is much

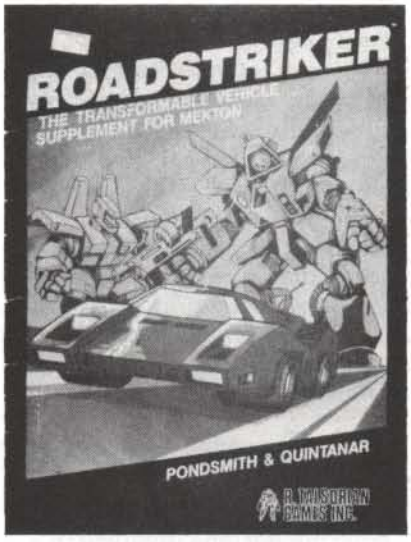
simpler than building a *Car Wars* vehicle, though some things are not clearly mentioned, such as : do transformation points add weight? Is not answered until later (for now though, yes.) A wide variety of mecha can be built using these rules, and by the time you need something new to work with, you're ready for their next supplement, *Roadstriker*. Mekton combat is as about simple as any system I've seen yet that does so much with so few pages., but be careful, juggling the percentages necessary for attacker and defender can burn you out quickly, so keep the book open as a handy reference to the tables or get the combat screen.

Role playing is what I enjoy more often than any other type of game; so when a new system comes along, I'll stop and take a good look. I think Mekton is the best little Roleplaying system to come down the pike since the fantasy trip.

I will probably still be playing Mekton even if robot interest dwindles or my champions campaign breaks up. Of special note to any RPG GM is the Mekton "Lifepath", a flowcharted history generator that could be adapted to other RPG systems (hint, hint, hint...) Role playing combat is very quick and bloody, a very strong character who punches an average (or weaker) character in the head, kills him, period. One wishes for a subdual damage allocation, but if you want it, you'll have to do it yourselves.

Last, but not least, is the Algol Sourcebook, wherein mighty armies war with gigantic metal warriors, and a place is provided to start campaigning if you don't have the time or the temperament to create a world of your own. Even if you've seen all of the Japanese animation featuring giant robots, I strongly suggest that you at least give it a once-over, because these guys and gals at R. Talsorian Games know how to put together a good game. This reviewer strongly suggests that Mekton is a must for any game shelf.

ROADSTRIKER
The Transformable Vehicle Supplement for Mekton



Published by: R. Talsorian Games
Price: $8.00
Reviewed by: David Jacobs

More mighty mecha in miniature for more massive Mekton mayhem! Obviously inspired in part by the mecha from mospeda, *Robotech* - the new generation. Although I am of the opinion that the robotech mecha are smaller Mektons, rather than the equivalent "Roadstriker". Not only does *Roadstriker* provide for common man mecha, it also expands on transforming, a relatively minor subject in the original Mekton rules. Also included is a role-playing scenario, Arcadian Deathroad and new character types; Mechacop and Roadstriker military personel.

The book is divided into several parts: (1) Roadstriker construction (2) Combat and repair (3) Advanced transformable rules (4) Mechacop and Roadstriker Military Career Fields (5) Arcadian Deathroad; a role-playing module. First, Construction of Roadstrikers is as simple as building a Mekton, with additional options that are not available to Mekton units; such as camouflage, dropped weapons, ejection seats, magnetic grapples, and stealth. Roadstriker combat is fully compatible with Mekton, though fighting Mekton vs Roadstrikers could be termed suicidal at best. It combines the essentials of mecha combat; dismembering, judo throws, grabs, pins and trips with the best of vehicle combat; bootleggers, damage blowthrough, dropped/sprayed weapons, jumping, knockback, ramming, and repairs. Juggling the modifying percentages to combat is still a daunting task, but the problem of targeting a specialized Mekton (i.e., no arms, no legs, two heads) is solved by the multiform targeting tables. The advanced transformable section gives you more mecha for your money, with expanded options for transformable Mektons of all types. One thing I'd like to see is an option that allows a group of Mektons or Roadstrikers to merge into a larger, more powerful unit.

Background of the Roadstriker's history as it relates to algol, the gameworld of Mekton, is interesting to say the least, and if I didn't have a campaign world of my own, I would be sorely tempted to use it straight. The descriptions of the mechacop and military roadstriker character types is a welcome addition to the available careers of the Mekton world. Arcadian deathroad is a role-playing module featuring mechacops and roadstrikers. It's collection of scenarios complete with NPC's for back up and background, and a great way to introduce roadstrikers to your Mekton gaming.

TRAVELLER™: 2300

TRAVELLER: 2300

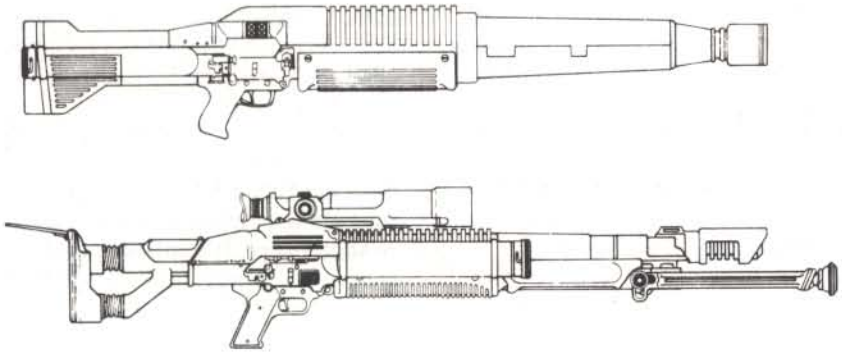
Designed by: Marc Miller, Frank Chadwick, Timothy Brown
Published by: Game Designers' Workshop
Price: $20
Reviewed by: Rick Swan

Traveller: 2300 is a glossy science fiction role-playing game from GDW that fills a void I'm not sure needs filling. Set in the early 24th Century when Earth is making its first steps towards exploration and colonization of new star systems, *Traveller: 2300* stakes out a niche somewhere between the apocalyptic guerrilla theatre of *Twilight: 2000* and the classy space operatics of the original *Traveller*, both earlier role-playing games from GDW. While *Traveller: 2300* boasts sleek production values and polished presentation the concept is barelt broad enough to justify an entirely new game. It doesn't take much of a stretch to imagine the bulk of this material adequately handled in a sourcebook for *Traveller* or, with perhaps a little more of a stretch, as an advanced version of *Twilight: 2000*. Depending on your familiarity with those games, *Traveller: 2300* could either be an intriguing introduction of s-f role-playing or a retread that overlaps with other products a little too much.

Traveller: 2300 avoids the cliche of a future world government and instead assumes a continuation of competing nations involved in a complex web of rivalries and alliances. Stellar exploration has been made possible by the discovery of the electromagnetic quantum jump. Earth nations have established 55 human colonies on 29 worlds; three of these colonies have gained independence. This, along with many other historical details, is outlined in the Player's Book. It's all entertainingly presented, although there's perhaps too much background for a novice to digest.

Like the rest of the Player's Manual, the character generation system is clearly written and easy to use. Basic attributes are based on the character's homeworld. Characters from a Core (civilized) world are generally better educated while characters from a Frontier (less civilized) world are generally better tougher. Homeworlds also have an influence on physical make-up, producing mesomorphs (muscular builds), ectomorphs (slender), and endomorphs (stocky) according to the planet's gravity.Physical and psychological attributes are generated by rolling dice with various modifiers, and skills are purchased with an allotment of skill points. Career, life level, age, nationality, and money are also determined, and the character is outfitted from a wide variety of fanciful equipment, ranging from Jaschonek Fabrikand A-9 Sturmgewehr portable plasma guns to the Portacomp hand-held computer with Language Cracker Memory Chip.

The Referee's Manual explains the game mechanics, and here things falter a bit. All actions are resolved by successful completion of



"tasks", defined as literally any activity a character may perform. Each task consists of a description of the attempted action, the degree of difficulty, assets (characteristics and skills which may modify the outcome), the time it takes, and the general type, all of which can require fairly involved calculations. Assets, for instance, produce modifiers from the highest rated skills, the sum of those skills, or an average of the skill ratings, further modified by labelled characteristics or an average of crucial characteristics. Determination of time spent requires the referee to navigate the rules such as "The time roll for a task is 306; an average throw of 306 is 10, which produces an average accomplishment time equal to the average time for the task." An unsuccessful task roll requires a roll on yet another table to determine the outcome of the failure. It all works, but it takes a lot of effort to use; even the designers acknowledge this by suggesting that references create a "task library" in a notebook or computer file for easy reference. Easier yet would be to develop a less clumsy method, something I suspect most referees will do rather than bother with the given system.

Combat is complex but manageable. A character can take two actions in each round, such as conducting aimed fire, reloading, or moving. If a hit is successful, damage is assessed after factoring in modifiers for weapon type and armor. Space combat is neatly explained in four pages of rules (interestingly, half the number of pages it takes to explain personal combat). Space combat may not be particularly realistic, but because of the streamlined rules, it's more fun. Weary referees may find themselves nudging the players into orbit rather than handle another chart-heavy skirmish on the ground.

Other material includes a well-designed system for generating planets, an overview of spaceship design, and a large color map of the galaxy showing the location of stars within 50 light years of Earth. Complimenting the map is a list of more than 750 stars detailing their size, magnitude, and coordinates. The package is completed with a brief introductory adventure that, regardless of claims to the contrary, is more perfunctory than meaningful. You'll have to wait for the official modules to give the game a real workout.

Traveller: 2300 is not as good as *Twilight: 2000* and is a distant third behind the original *Traveller*, although admittedly those games are tough acts to follow. Because of some tricky mechanics, it's not a good game for beginners, but experienced gamers interested in the concept should check it out. *Traveller: 2300* has a number of good ideas worth exploiting, particularly the political aspects and all those mysterious unexplored stars. Keep an eye out for the modules and see what develops.

CAR WARS EXPANSION KIT #10

Published by: Steve Jackson Games
Designed by: W. G. Armintrut & C. Mara Lee
Graphics by: C. Mara Lee
Price: $5.50
Reviewed by: Richard A. Edwards

There are two parts to this latest expansion of Steve Jackson's hottest game. The first is 170 counters reprinted from expansion sets 3,4,5,7,8. These counters include helicopters, trikes, cycles, trucks, tractor trailers, police units, grasshoppers, buses, a helipad, and more! In addition there is a colorful deluxe wheelie for keeping track of handling class and speed for one vehicle. It also lists the crash table

modifier and targeting modifier for the vehicle as well as calculating the control table roll. The counters are well done, and they are in full color, covering a wide range of units as well as drop spike plates and racing pits. The wheelie is colorful and easy to use with the instructions printed right on the wheel itself so even I can't lose them.

My main complaint about the wheelie is that even with care in lining up the holes and connecting the pieces after cutting them out the lines still do not quite line up. I am sure that a perfect fit would solve the problem, but how many gamers with scissors are going to get a perfect fit? The margin for error here is small. Even though most of the time I can guess as to which line it is supposed to point to, I cannot always be sure.

For those gamers who already have a large collection of vehicle counters from the many expansions put out for *Car Wars* this expansion might be merely an expensive way to get one of the wheelie. Since it is necessary to use one wheelie per vehicle if you use it to keep track of vital game information it would have been nice to have a separate expansion with just the wheelie for less money.

Journey across the light years exploring the uncharted systems of the frontier; watch your two shadows under a double star; war against the unfathomable Kafers amid the exotic environments of alien worlds; ride the beanstalk down to the towering cities of Earth, the economic center of an ever expanding human civilization. Be a part of the New Age in **Traveller: 2300**—the state of the art in science fiction role-playing.

State-of-the-Art Science-Fiction Role-Playing.

History

Traveller: 2300 plays against a background of Earth 300 years after the cataclysm of the Third World War. Set in a world where nations still clash, civilization has crawled back to its prewar levels, and then beyond. The world is dominated by the Third French Empire. Earth's hundred nations have colonies among the stars. First contact happened long ago, and commerce with alien intelligences is now commonplace.

But exploration still goes on. The conquest of the stars has just begun.

Game Systems

Playable realism. Many games which are realistic can't be played; most playable games aren't terribly realistic. **Traveller: 2300** is both at once, balancing exquisite detail with simple, accurate game systems.

The heart of **Traveller: 2300** is its task resolution system. With it, the referee has a plethora of examples and precedents to use in any situation, and the players have a reasonable idea what their options will be on any given task. Rules cover all aspects of conflict resolution from arguments to all-out battles. Detailed character generation, starship operations and combat, and economics make **Traveller: 2300** the state of the art in science fiction role-playing. If you're playing anything else, you're behind the times.

The Near Star Catalog

The **Traveller: 2300** universe deals with star systems within 50 light years of Earth. Extensive research and analysis has produced the most accurate star map ever made. Never before has such a monumentous task been undertaken, either in gaming or in science fiction. Over 700 stars in over 500 systems, on a 22" x 25" full color map. Location, spectral type, size, and magnitude are all documented in a separate star catalog.

The local neighborhood of stars contains white dwarves, red giants, and warm yellow stars like our own. The map extends far beyond the furthest reaches of human settlement into the realms of aliens and the unexplored. **Traveller: 2300** maps out the local neighborhood in detail never before accomplished, helping to make the game what it was designed to be—the ultimate in playable realism.

Traveller: 2300 includes complete rules for science fiction role-playing, a complete full color map of everything within 50 light years of Sol with accompanying stellar data, and an introductory adventure set on mankind's frontier. Be a part of the New Age, with **Traveller: 2300**.

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STAR TREK III

ALONE AGAINST THE FINAL FRONTIER

Published by: West End Games, Inc.
Designers: Greg Costikyan, Douglas Kaufman, John M. Ford
Price: $16
Complexity level: Introductory (The Sherwood Syndrom). Low (Free Enterprise), Moderate (The Kobayashi Maru)
Rules clarity: Good (The Sherwood Syndrom, Free Enterprise), Fair (The Kobayashi Maru)
Graphics quality: Excellent
Reviewed by: J. Michael Caparula

I'm the kind of gamer that likes to game all the time. I don't know a lot of people who share this sympathy, so I have a large supply of solo games to keep me amused between all-night sessions of *Diplomacy*. I'm happy to say that *Star Trek III* is a welcome addition to the collection *times three*, for the package contains nothing less than three separate, highly playable, and, best of all, highly challenging solo games.

In *The Kobayashi Maru*, the player takes a reprogrammed version of the test given to Lt. Saavik at the beginning of *"The Wrath of Khan"*. He must stealthily maneuver *The Enterprise* through Klingon Space and rescue a damaged Federation vessal, while avoiding Klingon patrols, mines, asteroids, and the possibility of triggering an interstellar incident. The game utilizes a vectorless three-dimensional movement system and a first-person screen display when the battle is joined. The familiar *Enterprise* crew is aboard to personalize play. Expect to play the game a good four or five times before you even think about winning, and even then there is enough randomness in the initial set-up to prevent repeated success next time out. The game is marred only by an unclear rule about *Enterprise* movement at the end of the combat round. Do Klingon ships stay with the *Enterprise* or are they left behind? The Sequence of Play Flowchart seems to indicate that the enemy vessels *do* pursue but it is not stated in the rules.

Free Enterprise is the most pleasant surprise of the new package. The challenge is to efficiently use a fleet of six shuttlecraft to run a trade route throughout a planetary system. You're competing against the Klingons to show a greater profit and subsequently win the system. The real trick is in predicting the ever-changing fads and trends on each planet. Glisten IV may desire shocking pink Frofnobles today but it could be puce Snoutsilks tomorrow! That warehouse full of lime green Thrinwhistles isn't doing you any good if the big trend among the planets is cyan Thorax Leathers. Clearly, the designer has sought to simulate the workings of a free-market economy, and he has succeeded admirably. Not only is Free Enterprise the most challenging and rewarding game in *Star Trek III*, it is also one of the best solo games I have ever played.

Last, and unfortunately least, *The Sherwood Syndrom*. The situation would have made a great TV episode: A Federation sociologist has flipped out and set up a feudal despotism on a primative planet, closely resembling that of Prince John in 12th century England. The crew of the *Enterprise* must be the merry men who free the political prisoners and stir the peasants to rebellion. The challenge is to use a minimum amount of advanced technology, for this increases the natives' belief in witchcraft and makes the rebellion harder to spark. There are some wonderful ideas incorporated into the design, but they don't quite gel into a fun game, for much of play is spent moving the ever vigilant king's men, who are constantly making life (and winning) difficult for our heroes. No less than thirteen prisoners must be freed before the royal party completes its circumnavigation of the kingdom and wins the fealty of all the towns. I daresay the game is unwinable without a lot of luck, and I challenge the designer to provide a surefire way of winning (if there is one).

But I suppose finding that winning formula is what makes this package so attractive. I'm sure I'll be pulling this one off the shelf more than any other when I'm in the mood for a challenging solo experience. This is a terrific value. Here's hoping that West End plans a continuous series of *Star Trek* games as challenging and exciting as these.

A TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE ADVENTURE

THE SILICON SOLUTION

By Erick Wujcik

Sooner or later the enemies of mutant animals, whether in our century, or in the distant world of AFTER THE BOMB, will stumble across the idea of ARTIFICIAL MUTANT ANIMALS. These devices will be used to infiltrate the mutant animals and sabotage them from inside their organizations. The following is a scenario designed to introduce the new robot enemy.

NOTE: This is a MODERATE to DIFFICULT scenario. No particular number or skill level of characters are needed, but the players themselves should be top notch. Use whichever of the two "Player Background" sections that best suits your own TMNT campaign.

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• *After the Bomb is a trademark of Palladium Books.*

PLAYER BACKGROUND (CONTEMPORARY TMNT):

This item is prominent in local newspapers. Read the following to the group:

The newspaper headline reads, "Valuable Experimental Animal Escapes," over an article that reads "Police and private security guards spent several hours last night searching for an animal missing from a Tekrak Corporation laboratory. The hunt was called off shortly before midnight when an InterTech security officer found the animal hiding in a nearby garage.

Research scientist Maxwell Tyrone was heard to say, 'It's nothing to get upset about. Alex is perfectly harmless, he's just curious. He would have come back for dinner as soon as he got hungry.'

When our photographer asked to see the animal a company spokesman reported, 'I'm sorry, Alex is under heavy sedation and must not be disturbed by more strangers.'

PLAYER BACKGROUND AFTER THE BOMB

The following speech should be read after the characters have been assembled in a briefing room:

"This is as frightening as anything this office has ever experienced. Two days ago we captured a small group of Canine Commandoes from New Kennel. They were driving a truck filled with... well, with the bodies of two dozen assorted mutant animals.

One of their group finally cracked under questioning and admitted that the humans are working on a new project called 'The Silicon Solution.' We have the location of the project's headquarters. Your job is to get in there and find out what is going on."

GAMEMASTER INFORMATION

The facts of the player briefing are a plant by their enemies. It is

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

COMPOUND SECURITY ROBOT

Attributes: I.Q. 3, P.S. 24, P.P. 18, P.E. 20, Spd. 21
Weight: 685 pounds **Height:** 9' 7"
Hit Points: None **S.D.C.:** 1,075
Disposition: Formal and precise, each robot will say "halt, intruder" just before opening fire. Should anyone actually halt they will demand the proper password. Since the enemy wants the place raided, they've made a really simple password, "Friend.
Combat Skills
Attacks Per Melee: Each weapon can fire at maximum rate.
Retractable Ion Rod: 250' Range, 1 shot per melee, +2 to Strike, 120 charges, and 6D6 damage.
Twin .45 Submachine Guns: 400' Range, each fires a burst of 8 every melee at 8th Level Expert (+4 to Strike, 3 of 8 shots), and 4D6 damage per round.
Electrical Defenses: Anyone touching the activated robots will be subjected to a 3D6 per melee electrical sho ck.
Sensory Equipment: (1) Motion Detector, (2) Infra Red Detector, (2) Optical Sensors, and (1) Nightscope Sensor. Vulnerable to just about any damage, with A.R. 10 and S.D.C.

MOBILE SURVEILLANCE ROBOTS

Alignment: Robotic
Attributes: I.Q. 1, P.S. 14, P.P. 10, P.E. 10, Spd. 6
Weight: 65 pounds **Height:** 3' 2"
Hit Points: None **S.D.C.:** 105
Disposition: Friendly and dumb. They will whirl up to any intruder and say, "Please present identification." Just about anything,: Badge, Credit Card or Picture will be acceptable. It will then say, "Welcome to Tekrak Corporation. Are you a -one- new employee, -two- visitor, or -three- authorized security officer?" It'll keep repeating that exact line until each intruder has actually said either one , two or three . Note that characters with Telepathic Transmission can't really speak, so the robot will just keep following and repeating its request. Once identified it will simply turn around and whirl away.

If attacked or damaged, the surveillance units will turn on their built-in siren. This siren will continue blasting until the robot is completely destroyed (all S.D.C. gone).
Combat Skills
Attacks Per Melee: None, unarmed.
Electrical Defenses: Anyone touching the activated robots without authorization will be subjected to a 2D6 per melee electrical shock.
Sensory Equipment: (1) Extra Sensitive Motion Detector and (1) Optical Sensors. Each is A.R. 7 and S.D.C. 12.

GEORGE THE ARTIFICIAL MUTANT CAT

As far as the characters are concerned this is a large, powerful-looking mutant cat. It is actually a Basic Artificial Mutant Animal (BAMA) with a standard control system personality. Also built in are the Artificial Blood and Large Claw options.
Alignment: Robotic
Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.A. 8, P.S. 21, P.P.10, Spd 10
Weight: 780 pounds **Height:** 5' 11"
Hit Points: None **S.D.C.:** 245
Disposition: "Boy, am I glad to see you guys! Do you think you can get me outta here?" will be the first thing George says. He's programmed to be friendly but a little slow. Mostly he'll act like the new kid on the block, asking to tag along and trying to fit in by agreeing with everybody. As much as possible he will attempt to imitate the phrases and words used by the player characters. If asked about "Alex", he'll point to the dead rabbit and say, "You were a little late." He will generally do anything asked of him, even incredibly stupid things. He will **never** attack a human.
Combat Skills
Attacks Per Melee: 2. No plus to Strike, Parry or Dodge, Retractable Claws do 2D6+6 damage. (P.S. bonus included)
Sensory Equipment: (1) Motion Detector, (1) Nightsight, plus standard visual and audio sensors.

really an invitation to invade the factory complex so that a new device can be tested. It's called a BAMA (*Basic Artificial Mutant Animal*) and its purpose is to infiltrate and spy on real mutant animals. Here's a description of the factory complex. It is applicable to contemporary TMNT or *After the Bomb*.

The Wall: Surrounding the factory courtyard is an 18' brick wall topped with barbed wire. Two guard posts, one in the southeast corner and one in the northwest have spotlights and a clear view of the wall top, the inner courtyard and the surrounding area. What makes this less intimidating is the fact that there are no guards on duty at night. The lights swing around at fifteen minute intervals.

Security Guard Post: In the center of the south wall there is a combination gate house and guard station, also unmanned.

Interior Courtyard: The west area is an empty parking lot. The area between the gate and the building and the wall, to both the north and east, there are scattered trees and bushes. It's roughly 100 feet from the wall to the centrally located factory building. The Compound Security Robot goes completely around the building every ten minutes.

Building Entrances: Doors include the main entrance in the middle of the south wall, the emergency exit in the middle of the north wall, and four large garage doors spaced along the west wall. Huge, easily opened windows are also found on the ground level.

Factory Complex: Inside the building there is a huge open area filled with assembly line machinery. This takes up the whole first floor of the building, from ground level to 50' feet up. Next to the south entry door there is an automated elevator. At the far end, in the middle of the middle of the north wall, is a stairway. Both the stairs and elevator go to all the floors.

Second Floor: Another large open room, this one containing high tech consoles for micro-electronics assembly. One of the Mobile Surveillance Robots constantly moves around the room.

Third Floor: There is a long hallway leading from the elevator in the south to the stairway at the north. A Mobile Surveillance Robot is on patrol in the hall. Doors on the east side lead to the men's room, the women's room, and a locked door leads to a computer center. On the west side the first two doors lead to a large room filled with desks and chairs, like a sacrificial pool, and the last (locked) door leads to a plush office.

Basement: As with the first

floor there is a hall patrolled by a Mobile Surveillance Robot. The two doors on the east side lead to a firing range and some kind of surgery (used for vivisection). The single door in the middle of the hall's west wall leads to the cage area. There are 80 large cages, arranged in four rows of 20, but only two are occupied. In one is a dead mutant rabbit who seems to have died recently from a collection of slash wounds. In the other is George.

GAME RESOLUTION CONTEMPORARY TMNT

Operating behind the scenes is our old friend, Doc Feral (see *TMNT & Other Strangeness*, *TMNT Adventure Book*, and *TMNT Guide to the Universe* for more information on Feral). If George is accepted as a genuine mutant animal by the player characters, then he'll continue to operate under cover. This may continue for several adventures with George serving as a useful and trusted member of the group. Feral will set up traps for the characters, but he will not turn George against them unless absolutely necessary.

If George fails to infiltrate the player character group than Feral will probably discontinue production of other BAMA robots. However, he will continue spending money on researching improved versions.

GAME RESOLUTION AFTER THE BOMB

If possible, George will accompany the player characters all the way back to Cardania (or wherever they come from). Then the robot will disappear into the population. It will then act as a go-between, helping other BAMA units infiltrate into mutant animal country. Eventually BAMA units will start engaging in acts of sabotage.

The Empire of Humanity will not give up if George is discovered. They will construct at least two dozen more units and attempt to use them for infiltration and sabotage.

BAMA UNITS & OPTIONS: Any member of artificial mutant animals can be constructed using the information below. For a more

comprehensive list of robot and android possibilities see the Palladium Book, *Heroes Unlimited.*

Basic Artificial Mutant Animal (BAMA): A basic unit consists of a metal body frame, electrical control system, two arms, two legs, head with eyes (visual sensors), ears (audio sensors) and mouth (speech synthesizer) built-in. A combination monitor/remote control radio is also standard.

In addition the unit can be shaped to resemble a Size Level 9 through 14 mutant animal. Also included is realistic fur, skin and facial features along with a control system to simulate facial expressions, muscle movements and realistic gestures. The basic unit also has a P.S. of 16, a Spd. of 10, and an S.D.C. of 125. Weight for the whole unit is equal to the normal Size Level times two (i.e. a Size 13 would weigh 700 pounds).
Base Price: $5,000,000.

Simulated Mutant Animal Personality Control System: This computer is designed to imitate the known personality traits, movements, and reactions of a normal mutant animal. It controls the BAMA perfectly and results in an IQ of 12, a M.A. of 8, a P.P. of 10, and two attacks per melee round. Detached from the brain housing it may be connected to an optional audio-video display unit (4150,000) and replay any previous experience.
Base Price: $1,000,000

Artificial Blood System: A quarter-inch thick circulatory system continuously flows with an artificial blood fluid. The pumping is done with a device that sounds like a real heart, designed to speed up and slow down according to other body movements. If the unit is cut the artificial blood will flow realistically, clot quickly and give the appearance of a real flesh and blood injury.
Base Price: $500,000

Large Retractable Claws: With the addition of a little bulk to the robot's skin, and an additional 180 pounds, an extra 120 S.D.C. can be added to the unit. Note that this is not compatible with the artificial blood system.
Base Price: $250,000

Amplified Physical Strength (P.S.): Each additional point of P.S. costs $4,000. Each point also adds another 20 pounds to the robot's total weight. The strength is added evenly to both arms and both legs. All BAMA units carry 25 times their body weight and lift 35 times. Bonuses to damage are standard for P.S. Maximum P.S. is 24.

Nightsight: This starlight visual amplifier has a range of 600 feet. Sudden, unexpected exposure to bright lights will disorient the robot for 1D6 melee rounds.
Base Price: $60,000

Motion Detector: For a range of roughly 60 feet the robot will detect any motion. Note that it works only in open areas and around single corners, not through walls or around more than one corner.
Base Price: $100,000

TALISMAN

Questions and Answers

Questions by Kevin S. O'Brien

Answers by Games Workshop

These questions and official answers are used with permission of games workshop.

1. Certain characters have the power that they "need not roll in the Forest or crags; they are always safe. If a character has this power, either naturally or by a follower, may he elect to roll if he wants to. If "yes", must he accept the outcome of the roll or may he then elect to be safe?

Yes, characters may elect to roll if they wish to, however, they must accept the outcome of the die roll. the Woodsman card should read, "You ned not roll" rather than "You do not roll."

2. Certain characters and followers can evade enemies in certain spaces. Does that mean only enemies, and not other characters.

The characters may evade enemies and other characters but they may not evade strangers or event personalities.

3. In the second expansion set,

the Woodsman and the Ninja start in the WOODS and the Centaur starts in the PLAINS. Does this mean that they can start on any space of that type? There are three WOODS spaces in the Outer Region and one in the Middle Region; can the Woodsman start at the one in the Middle Region?

All characters must start in the outer region.

4. The Amazon "may choose to roll two dice to determine how many spaces she can move." If she rolls two dice what does she do:

A. Choose one of the numbers and move that number of spaces.
B. Total the two numbers and move that number of spaces.
C. Choose to move either one of the two numbers or the total of the two.

The correct answer is "A".

5. Can the assassin assassinate spirits?

No. Spirits may never be effected by physical attacks.

6. About the Centaur's bow:

A. He can "fire at any... which is no more than three spaces away after they have moved..." Shouldn't it be after you have moved"?

Yes.

B. He can shoot strangers. What is the strength of strangers?

This is an error. Nobody can attack strangers at any time.

C. Can killed enemies be killed for strength?

Yes.

D. Can he shoot spirits? They are enemies, but have no strength.

No.

7. About another of the Centaur's powers: "Any other Centaur you encounter will become your follower for one combat only, if you roll over their strength on one die". There is only one Centaur in the adventure deck, and it is a stranger. So, how does this work?

This is an error. Delete it from the card.

8. If a merchant evades a goblin, hobgoblin, or ogre by giving it a gold, does the gold go on the space or to the stock pile?

The gold goes to the stock pile.

9. The orc can take goblins, hobgoblins, and wolves as followers and they will stay for one combat.

A. Do you pick the combat for which they are used, or is it automatically the next one, and does Psychic Combat count as combat?

You pick the combat. Psychic Combat does not count.

B. After combat, do the followers stay in the space or go to the discard pile?

The follower goes to the discard pile.

10. Should the Necromancer be able to attack others characters using Psychic Combat?

Yes. This information is missing from the card.

11. Can the Samurai shoot spirits with his bow? They are enemies, but they use Psychic Combat.

No.

12. About the Satyr's power to panic:

Since the Satyr must keep the panicked character in the same region, what happens if he panics a character at the Plain of Peril? The Valley of Fire? The Crown of Command?

In these cases only, the panicked character may move out of the region.

13. The soldier may get a new helmet and/or sword if the one he had was taken from him or lost. Does purposeful alchemy (by spell or at the city), trading during market day, and/or dropping (for instance, when carrying capacity is exceeded [although he may drop it even if he could carry it!]) count as being taken or lost?

Yes, to all the examples.

14. The Warrior of Chaos receives a gift everytime he kills an enemy. Does the small 'e' in "enemy" mean that killing (taking one life from) a character also entitles the Warrior of Chaos to a gift?

No. However, he does receive a gift if he kills a character.

15. About the Witch Doctor's Evil Eye Curse:

A. A cursed character must move to the chapel by normal movement. How is this done? What if the character does not roll the exact number and must overshoot his goal? Must a character take the shortest path? Are rafts allowed? How about Teleport Spells?

The cursed character must move by the fastest possible route to the chapel. Otherwise, all normal movement rules apply.The character must move the exact number rolled on the dice, and may over or undershoot the chapel square.

B. A cursed character must move to his goal before continuing his quest. What does this mean? Can they still encounter spaces and/or characters on their way? Can they cast spells?

The characters in the game are on a quest to find the Throne of Command and if cursed, must visit the chapel before they can carry on with their quest. Apart from this, all of the normal rules of the game apply.

16. Does the Woodmans Animal Follower only add to his strength in combat or at all other times? There is no limitation on the Woodsman's card, but on other characters (i.e. the Minstrel) have the "(only) in combat" limitation.

The animal follower adds its strength in combat only.

SPELLS

17. About the Finger of Death:

A. Is this instead of, or in addition to, an encounter? If being attacked by something with more than two lives, does the combat or Psychic Combat still happen? Can you play it after taking a life in combat?

The Finger of Death is in addition to combat. It can be cast at any time before or after combat. It is a very powerful spell.

B. If another character lands on your space and says he is playing the Finger of Death on you, can you then evade him with an immobility or an Invisibility Spell?

Yes.

C. Can it be used to kill strangers? How about other individuals? If so, does it negate the encounter?

No.

18. About the Fireball:

A. If you use it to kill an enemy with strength, may you save it for strength points?

No.

B. Can it be used against spirits?

No.

19. Can you cast a healing on yourself as you lose your last life or must you have at least one life when you cast it?

You must have at least one life left.

20. Are strangers effected by the Lightening Bolt?

No.

21. Misdirection allows you to move another character when they next have a turn. Does this mean that the spell must be cast before the die roll it will effect?

You may cast the spell after seeing the die roll.

22. Reflection is a great idea for a spell, but its application is confusing. What are the details of the magic system it operates from? For instance, it may be that a Reflected Spell still represents the desire of the original caster. Thus, a Finger of Death would be reflectable, but Mesmerism would not be. This system makes sense to me, but it limits the power of Reflection.

Also, could one reflect a hex or a Destroy Magic. If so, what would happen?

Another possibility is that the casters of the Reflection Spell takes over the original caster's spell and changes it to his desire. Thus a Reflected Mannerism allows the caster of the reflection to take a follower from the original caster, or would it be from another player? A Reflected Destruction would allow the caster of Reflection to Destroy an upturned card of his choice.

However, both of these systems have the same problem: can you reflect a spell that would not be castable? If Player A casts a Nullify at Player B, can Player B (or Player C?) cast a Reflection if Player A has no other spells? Can Mesmerism be reflected (in my second system) if the original caster has no followers? Slow motion is supposed to be cast at the start of the turn of the affected player; if Player A casts it on Player B and Player B reflects it, does it affect Player A, even though it was not cast at the start of A's turn? What does a reflected Counterspell do?

Any spell can be reflected as long as it is cast at the character, or any of his followers, who holds the Reflection Spell card. The spell is reflected back on the character who cast it (only) but the character who cast the Reflection Spell may decide upon its effects. If a reflected spell back on to a caster with no followers, the spell is simply discarded and has no effect.

23. When is Speed cast?

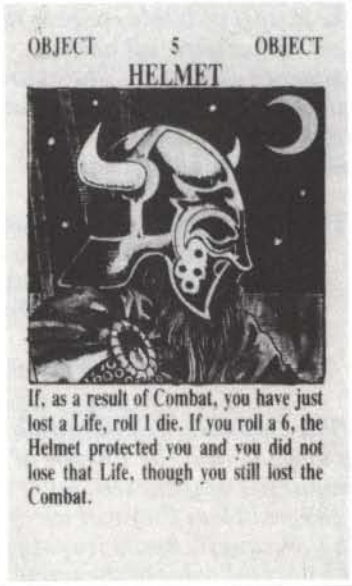
The Speed Spell can be cast before or after rolling the die. Important point, any spell can be cast at any time. It is completely up to the player when he casts the spell.

24. What exactly does Summon Storm affect? Are the Unicorn and/or the Familiar considered "Animal Followers"? What is the affect, if any, on mules, horses and carts, and /or warhorses?

The spell affects enemy animals except for the Unicorn and Familiar. If a character in the same square as a Storm has a mule, horse, horse and cart, or warhorse as a follower he must roll a die for each follower. On a five or six, the animal and any objects it may be carrying are lost to the discard pile.

ADVENTURES

25. If you have a helmet, a Shield, and Armour, and you lose a Life in Combat, can you roll for each of them, or only one?


OBJECT 5 OBJECT
HELMET
If, as a result of Combat, you have just lost a Life, roll 1 die. If you roll a 6, the Helmet protected you and you did not lose that Life, though you still lost the Combat.

You can roll for only one.

26. Can the bag of carrying, Concealed Pouch, Porters, Mules, and/or Horses and Carts carry any Objects or Magic Objects?

The bag of carrying, the Concealed Pouch, Porters, Mules, and Horses and Carts, can carry any Object that is man sized or smaller. Please use your common sense with these cards.

27. In Combat, when may you choose to use the Ancient Artifact?

Before everything.

28. About the bag of carrying:
   A. Does the bag of carrying never count as an Object towards carrying capacity (even when its empty?)
   B. Can you switch objects in it? If so, when?

The answer to both parts of the question is "yes", and objects may be switched at any time.

29. If you don't kill the entire band of Zombies, are all four there for the next character, or only those that remain alive?

All four are there for the next character.

EVENT 1 EVENT
BLIZZARD
Winter has come with a vengeance and a Blizzard envelops the land. For two Rounds, all players, no matter what Region they are in, may only move one space per turn. The Blizzard then abates, place it on the discard pile.

30. Does the Blizzard stay face-up on its space for its two rounds?

The Blizzard stays up for its two rounds. Then it is discarded.

31. About the Chinese Dragon:
   A. The card lists it as an Enemy - Monster, not an Enemy - Dragon. Does it count as a Dragon for the Holy Lance, the Minstrel, etc? Does it count as a Monster for the Runesword?

The card should read Enemy - Dragon. It does not count as a Monster for the Runsword.

   B. In determining a character's "weakest attribute" how do you count optional add-ons like Swords, the Potion of Strength, or the Mercenary?

Options or add-ons are not included.

C. If the attributes are tied, do you determine randomly which will be attacked?
Yes.

D. If the Chinese Dragon wins and takes a Magic Object, does it go to the Chinese Dragon's space or to the discard pile?
To the discard pile.

E. What if the losing character does not have a Magic Object?
Nothing happens.

32. About the Concealed Pouch:
A. Does the "etc." in the description refer to everything that can take an Object (for example: Raiders, Gust of Wind, Cyclops, Witch) except the Aquisition Spell?
Yes.

EVENT 1 EVENT
MAGICAL VORTEX
A Magical Vortex whirls through the land. It absorbs all Spells from all players. The Spells and the Magical Vortex must be placed immediately on their appropriate discard piles.

B. Does it count as an Object (in addition to what it holds)?
Yes.

C. Can you switch what is in it? If so, when can you?
Yes. At any time.

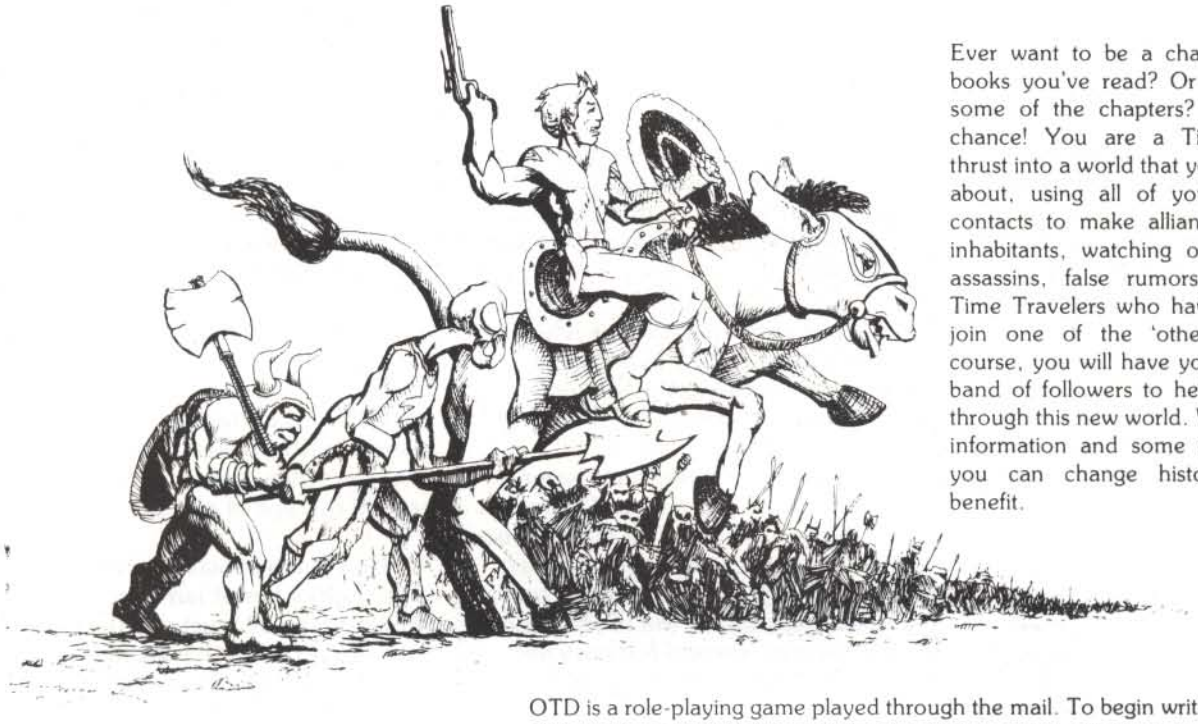
33. The Magical Vortex Spell takes Spells "from all players." Does this include the Genie's Spell?
No.

34. If you encounter the Magician and cast a Brainwave Spell on yourself, can you turn the temporary Craft into permanent Strength?
No.

35. The Man-At-Arms may die whenever the character he's with is supposed to lose a life. Does this mean a life lost in combat or by any means (Leper, Chasm, Psychic Combat)?
By any means.

36. About the Porter:
Can you switch the Objects

OUT TIME DAYS



Ever want to be a character in the books you've read? Or help rewrite some of the chapters? Here's your chance! You are a Time Traveler thrust into a world that you know little about, using all of your skills and contacts to make alliances with the inhabitants, watching out for spies, assassins, false rumors, and those Time Travelers who have chosen to join one of the 'other' sides. Of course, you will have your ever-loyal band of followers to help guide you through this new world. With the right information and some good timing, you can change history to your benefit.

OTD is a role-playing game played through the mail. To begin writing your part of the story, send $15 for a rulebook, start-up, and first five turns (or $2 for just the rules) to:
TWIN ENGINE GAMING, 3254 Maple Leaf Ct., Dept. **710**, San Jose, CA 95121

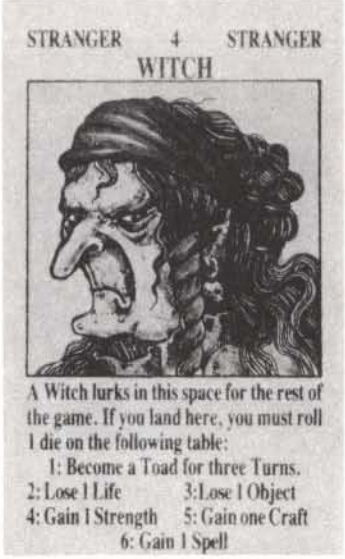
Circle Reader Service # 7

he carries at any time?
Yes.

37. About the Staff of Mastery:
A. It can be used on "any one enemy you land on." Does this mean only face-up Enemies, or can you also Master Enemies you draw?
You can master enemies you draw.
B. When you Master an Enemy, do you have to use it in your very "next Combat," or can you wait? If you have to use it, what if the attribute is wrong for your "next Combat" (or Psychic Combat)? This is, would you have to use a Mastered Ghost (with Craft) to fight a Lion (with Strength)? And, if you didn't have to use the wrong attribute, could you do it anyway (to get rid of the Mastered Enemy so that you could get another one)?
You must use a Mastered Enemy with Strength in the next combat you fight where you have to use strength, and you must use a Mastered Enemy with Craft in the next combat where you have to use Craft.

39. About the Warhorse:
A. What does it mean to Charge into Combat? Does it mean any Combat? (in which case it acts like a permanent Psionic Blast), or only against face-up Enemies and/or characters (and does it make a difference if you are attacking or being attacked?) Can you always charge on the Crown of Command?
You may use the Warhorse to charge into Combat for any Combat where you would normally use only Strength.

B. Does it say that it will "add your Craft to your Strength for one round of Combat only" to take into account the Pit Fiends and Band of Zombies, or was something else intended?
Yes.


STRANGER 4 STRANGER
WITCH
A Witch lurks in this space for the rest of the game. If you land here, you must roll 1 die on the following table:
1: Become a Toad for three Turns.
2: Lose 1 Life 3: Lose 1 Object
4: Gain 1 Strength 5: Gain one Craft
6: Gain 1 Spell

40. About the Witch:
A. If a Toad visits the Witch and rolls a one, is its time as a toad extended?
Yes.

B. If you lose an object to the witch, does it go to the witch or to the discard pile?
To the discard pile.

ENDINGS

41. The Demon Lord:
While a character is fighting the Demon Lord, a protective barrier keeps other characters from entering the Valley of Fire. does this mean that the Demon Lord only fights one Psychic Combat per turn (and, thus, it takes several turns to kill him)?

What about characters who are in the Valley of Fire? Or those elsewhere in the Inner Region? Must they move back?

A character fights one round of Psychic Combat per turn. Characters in the Valley of Fire must move out in their next turn and may not enter the Crown of Command space. Those elsewhere in the inner region may move as normal but may not enter the Valley of Fire square.

42. Pandora's Box
This is yet another really great idea, but I find it to be ambiguous. If you play Adventures or other Characters, is it as if they draw those cards on their turn? Can you play Enemies separately on another character, or must they be combined?

What spells are useable? Can an Immobility be cast on another character to take away their next turn, or does it simply immobilize them for the rest of your turn? Can Slow Motion be cast on another player, eventhough it's supposed to be cast at the beginning of their turn? Can you cast Temporal Warp on yourself eventhough you don't roll for movement, and your turn has started?

Each card you draw from Pandora's Box is played separately and therefore attacks are not combined. Adventure cards act exactly as if the player had drawn them themselves. CHANGE - All spell cards must be cast before your next turn. If you have any Spell cards at the start of your next turn they are discarded. Otherwise all the normal rules for Spell Cards apply. You may play any of the cards you draw on yourself if you wish and all the normal game rules apply.

43. The Belt of Hercules:
What if your regular strength is higher than 12 and/or you already have more than five lives. How do followers affect your strength? Can you still use them to add to your strength of 12?

Do you only fight one character per turn? Do you only fight one combat, or a series of them to the death? Does a character lose if he loses one life or all of them? Can you, the other player, take an object or gold instead of a life?

Can you be encountered (attacked) when it isn't your turn? Where is the character after your turn is over? (On the space of the last combat? The Crown of Command Space? Somewhere else? Off the board?) What if another character makes it up to the Belt of Her-

cules (The Crown of Command Space)?

If your Strength of Lives are higher than 12 or 5 respectively, you may choose which to use. Followers, Objects, and Magic Objects cannot increase the strength you gain from the Belt of Hercules. However, if they increase your strength to higher than 12 you may choose to use that instead of the 12 Strength you would gain from wearing the belt. You may fight one character per turn, but the fight is to the death, in other words, you carry on fighting until you or the character you have chosen is dead. A character loses once they have lost all of their lives. Neither player may take an object or gold instead of a life, they must both take lives when they win a combat. You can be encountered when it is not your turn, The character remains on the space of the last combat. Once you have the Belt of Hercules the only way another player may get it and thus win the game is by defeating you in combat.

44. The Dragon King

If you roll a two and defeat some, but not all, of the King's younger brothers, are they all there if this is rolled again?

If you roll a three, is it a fight to the death all during one turn, or one combat and Psychic Combat each turn? Can you leave? Can other come up? How is this done?

If you roll a four, the Dragon King attacks the other characters. Are these attacks simultaneous combat and Psychic Combat? Is there one incident of fighting per turn, or is it to the death? If it is only one incident per turn, he regenerates all five of his lives between combats that he regenerates? Does he keep attacking one character until he or that character dies? Does he only attack one character per turn, or does he fight all of them in one turn? Can others move up to the Dragon King? If so, what do they do? how does all of this work? If you roll a five, do you then roll one or two dice when you try to roll under your Craft?

All three of the King's brothers reappear if you roll a two again. If you roll a three, it is a fight to the death all during one turn. All the rules for a roll of three apply to a roll of four as well (in other words, the Dragon King attacks using Combat and Psychic Combat simultaneously and it is a fight to the death all during one turn.) The Dragon King fights each player in turn (your choice as to which order) and there are no moves in between the combats. In other words, he fights all of the other characters in one turn to the death. On a roll of five you must roll one die to roll under your craft.

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GURPS

No, GURPS is a game

GURPS
(Generic Universal RolePlaying System) Basic Set

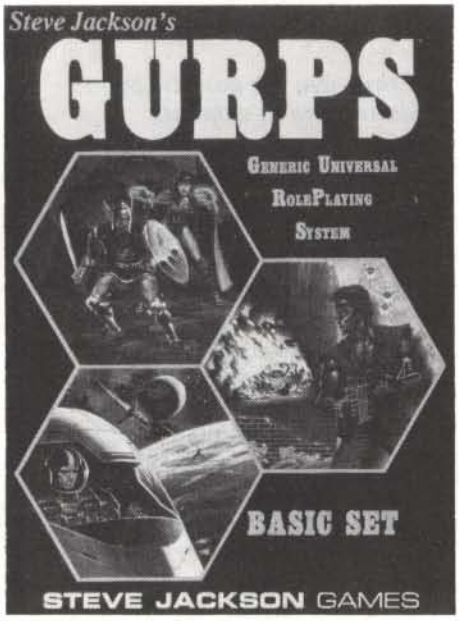
Published by: Steve Jackson Games
Designer: Steve Jackson
Price: $27.50
Complexity level: Low
Rules clarity: Good
Graphics quality: Good
Reviewed by: Michael DeWolfe

For years readers of *Space Gamer* have read of Steve Jackson's new roleplaying game. As time went along it picked up the name *GURPS* (then meaning, *Great Unamed RolePlaying System).* Ads started appearing, then, the game actually appeared, after its preview, *Man-To-Man. GURPS* is Steve Jackson's first venture into the field of roleplaying games. They've started with no less than a universally generic system to suit every game world.

The boxed set includes a 72 page character book, an 80 page adventuring book, a 24 page booklet of charts, tables, maps, and sample characters, a 32 page booklet containing a solo adventure and a regular adventure, cardboard heroes, and an errata sheet.

CHARACTER GENERATION

Book One is devoted entirely to character generation. Seventy-two pages of character generation. The system hinges on a point generation system. The number of points allowed, anywhere from 25 to 200,



defines how powerful your character is. The gamemaster decides what kind of campaign he'll run by the points characters start with. Usually, 100 points is a good starting place.

The four attributes are Strength (ST), Dexterity (DX), Intelligence (IQ) and Health (HT). ST defines a character's fatigue. HT defines how many hits a character can take. IQ and DX are the basis for mental and physical skills respectively. Every attribute starts at ten for no cost. Every point below this average gives the character more points to work with. Every point above this costs more. The scale is geometric, so the difference between 10 and 12 means 20 points while the spread between 10 and 15 is 60 points.

What about appearance, wisdom, size, power, et cetera? Advantages and disadvantages. Advantages and disadvantages cover almost everything that makes a character stand out from the other characters. They individualize characters and make it almost impossible for two characters to be alike. They actually can make roleplaying more fun. For example, Eidetic Memory allows a character to remember everything; if the player forgets, the GM and fellow players *must* remind him. With Common Sense as an advantage, your GM can give advice during a session as how to not act stupid. Disadvantages add in odious personal habits, dwarfism, gigantism, obesity, stuttering, honesty, and dozens of others. With this system, you can have a character that is better, because he is more fleshed out and the sheet will always remind you of how your character acts.

After advantages and Disadvantages, skills are created next. The harder a skill is the more proficient your character is at it, the more points it costs. The cost increase is geometric. Physical skills cost much more than mental skills, but start at a higher level. The beginning chance is based on IQ or DX (and occasionally HT and ST). The base chance is usually much lower and based on a related skill. *GURPS* uses six-sided dice only to resolve skill use, damage and other such things. Skills are based on this and to be successful, a 3D6 roll must be lower than your skill level. Critical successes and failures are based on how much the skill level and dice roll differed. *GURPS* includes combat, medical, physical, scientific, social, vehicular and several other types of skills. Magical skills are brushed off in *five* lines, Psionics get *six*, while all professional skills get a third of a page.

The system itself is simple, straight forward and sensible. But, there are faults. The time it takes for character generation is long. In my group's first try at *GURPS,* five players took four hours to get their characters ready. Granted this was our first try at the game, but the rules are essential and needed constantly during this phase to refer to tables and charts. With one set of full rules and one abbreviated set in the charts and tables, only one or two players can design characters at a time. Time consuming character generation is the only offset to the system.

THE ADVENTURING BOOK

The second book is mainly for

the gamemaster. It begins with a chapter on skill use and physical feats. The chapter is useful and detailed enough.

Next comes combat, first basic combat and then advanced combat. Basic combat is simple and after one or two uses can be replaced by advanced combat. The system works on a turn by turn basis where a character can perform one action or maneuver per second. The possib-ilities of action are exhaustive and allow much more than the usual dodge, parry, or attack options. Characters can step, feint attacks, aim, ready a weapon, defend all-out, attack all-out, and so on. Combat is quick but realistic. Advanced combat expands on basic combat and adds rules for hit locations, ranged weapons and special situations.

When an attack is made, there is a chance that the armor of the target has allowed the blow to harmlessly deflect off. This chance is summed up as Passive Defense (PD) and, when coupled with any Active Defense (dodging, parrying, etc.), is rolled against with a 3D6 roll. If the roll is below the PD plus Active Defense, the blow does not hit. However, the average PD is nothing and rarely gets higher than three or four, so the chance is about 1% of deflecting a blow. Active defenses (dodge, blocking, parrying) fare much better. Success in attack is based on the character's skill with that weapon. Damage is based on whether or not the attack is a thrust, swing, or ranged weapon damage. The former two types of damage are based on ST and added to or subtracted from by the weapon used. the basic damage is rolled, it goes through Damage Resistance before reducing hits. Combat is deadly in *GURPS* if the victim is unarmed, unarmored and unskilled; it is still dangerous if the victim has all of the above.

The rules of injury, healing and fatigue are also good. Injury in *GURPS* can render unconsciousness easily but death is less likely. When all "Hits" are gone, a character is unconscious. When twice the normal hits are gone, the character has to have an HT roll made or the character is dead. Considering that few downed characters are still attacked, this preserves the life of characters. The rules go on to say that if hits fall to -(HT x 10) the character is utterly destroyed. A grizzly but amusing addition.

The last 29 pages are occupied by sections on gamemastering. Rules, not just advice, are provided for the GM to craft and conduct adventures better. Tech levels, laws and customs, economics, religion and such, are provided. Non-player characters are handled well in *GURPS*. Their reactions are charted using a Reaction Table. Although it's an old innovation, it works well, resolving business, combat, loyalty, requests for aid and information and general reactions. With the reaction table, encounters can be resolved realistically.

One part of *GURPS* that disappointed me was the secton regarding animals. Though its coverage of how animals behave is good, *GURPS* has only 14 animals whose ecologies are far more exotic than they are. The rules aren't bad but the section as a whole is lacking.

The adventuring book shows a lot of attention and detail in most aspects; many issues and points are addressed. A strong part of these rules are their emphasis on roleplaying.

Overall, *GURPS* has a style to it. It's enjoyable to read. It's lucid but never takes itself too seriously. All of the rules use a two column format, but, in places, one column takes up two-thirds of the page and the other column is a 'sidebar' in a small typeface. The sidebars are filled with material that would bog down the rules if it were in the main text. Everything is arranged logically.

The GU in *GURPS* is for Generic Universal. The basic set is written for every possible setting and doesn't fail there. In that respect it does a fine job. However, the basic set is oriented towards fantasy. The cardboard heroes are all fantasy characters and the intro adventure and solo scenario are for fantasy. But for fantasy. But for those references, there would be none in the basic set. Therein lies a fault that came up the very first *GURPS* session I had. The players sat around the table eager to play, but the *GURPS* basic set on its own had only a smattering of fantasy material and less of anything else. In the rules the phrase "in an upcoming supplement" pops up frequently. Unless you want to do a lot of work or wait for "an upcoming supplement", you're out of luck. The *GURPS* basic set includes a questionaire/free subscription to *Roleplayer* and a flyer that lets *Man-To-Man* owners buy *GURPS* at a reduced price. *GURPS* should also have included a 10% coupon for the first game world you buy because you *have* to buy a game world supplement to play *GURPS*.

GURPS is a good roleplaying system. It combines old ideas with new and surpasses its contemporaries. Playability is paramount, though reality is sacrificed. Its ambitious goal of covering all game worlds looks to be accomblishable.

If you hate long and drawn out character generation, you'll not take to *GURPS*, unless the gamemaster writes up your character for you. The play is fast and fluid. All rules are simple, just the execution of a few may take a while.

Be forewarned, before you leave the game shop, pick up a *GURPS* game world, first.

Kingmaking the Noble Way

Warrior Knights
Published by: Games Workshop
Designed by: Derek Carver
Price: $24.00
Complexity: Moderate
Clarity: Moderate
Graphics: Excellent
Reviewed by: Tom Swider

Games Workshop has a reputation for making games with beautiful artwork and playable systems, *Warrior Knights* is no exception. *Warrior Knights* is a multi-player game in a medieval setting, with the laurels of victory going to the player who captures the majority of the cities on the board. A number of holes exist in the rules and the event cards tend to disrupt play too often, but not enough to discourage people from playing. In fact, the game is quite addictive to those of us who dislike *Kingmaker* because of the lack of skill needed to play the game. Unfolding the mapboard is enough to conjure up images of knights in shining armor riding off in a cloud of dust. Up to six Barons may partake in the struggle for the kingdom of the *Warrior Knights*.

Included with each set are a 17 x 22 inch full color map depicting a disposed King's Kingdom, 500 + counters to keep record of various game functions, cards, a die and a set of rules. A game with as many nice components as *Warrior Knights* justifies the 24 dollar price tag. The design of the components are both functional and asthetically pleasing. Mercenary, title and town levy cards have their troop strength and maintenance cost printed on the bottoms of the card and are slid underneath the noble controlling them. Town ownership markers look like film slides, allowing players to see the economic value of the town printed on the board. Town ownership markers also have the numbers one through four printed on their corners, which

allows the number of turns a town has been under siege to be kept track of by placing the noble piece on the corner. This avoids the need for additional counters on the board. The Cities/Ownership markers are large enough to place noble pieces "inside" the city, allowing players an easy method of differentiating between nobles inside and outside of towns. Some additional blank cards are included to replace those which are lost or for variants.

The game does have some physical drawbacks. The noble stickers were too large to be stuck on the plastic shields in my set of the game. To play the game, I had to trim the stickers such that they would fit on the plastic shields. This is not an easy task given the odd shape of the shield. The number of 5 Mark counters was not sufficient for most games, as players are allowed to invest money on trade boats, tieing up money counters for several turns. Players may wish to record investments on a separate sheet of paper to avoid shortages of money denominations.

The rules are written in the order in which they are encountered during a game turn. This system allows people to play their first game while reading the rules. Strategy hints are included in boxes after each rule to assist those playing for the first time, which is a nice feature. Overall organization of the rulebook leaves something to be desired, as the format makes it difficult to find a subtopic, and no index was provided.

Game turns are divided into two rounds of maintenance/movement/ combat, followed by an assembly meeting. The movement and combat procedures are nothing new; nobles move one space a turn on a 6x6 square grid or three if moving along a road. Combat is optional among nobles occupying a space, or when a noble wishes to lay siege to a city. Combats are resolved by computing an odds ratio and seiges are resolved by a combination of an odds rating and number of turns under siege generating a die range for a successful siege. Enemy troops are captured when defeating opposing nobles in combat, but *Warrior Knights* also has no effect and retreat results. A retreat result forces the nobles to retreat one square, and for each mercenary, a roll of 1 or 2 on one die results in its capture.

Auctions and Assemblies require some elaboration, as the assembly is both lengthy and important. Prior to such assembly, players are first given the opportunity to submit sealed bids for mercenary cards (one card ranging from 50 to 300 troops is drawn for each player); winners are allowed to purchase the troops and assign them to a noble at the end of the assembly. Auctions can be interesting, as players may overbid, or a random event resulting in the loss of many mercenaries may create a high demand for troops. Caution must be exercised when making bids because many a player faced insolvency for bidding too often during the auction, only to discover they no longer have the required funds to pay troop maintenance.

After the mercenary auctions, players secretly determine whether

or not they wish to attend the assembly. Votes may only be cast by those Barons attending the assembly. Barons may wish to pass on attending the assembly to initiate an attack on an enemy stronghold or to defend their own stronghold. A player may only initiate an attack on a stronghold during the assembly, and the reward for capturing a stronghold is tremendous. The victor takes immediate control of all of the loser's cities in the Kingdom along with half his treasury. Staying home to defend the stronghold from attack strengthens the stronghold and adds 300 troop strength to its normal defense of 300. Stronghold attacks are often used to win the game, and the decision to stay away from the assembly to make or hinder a stronghold attack is critical. Sometimes a Baron can not attend the assembly on account of a Govenorship assigned in a previous assembly round, or when a Baron failed to recognize an assembly motion. He is then blackballed from the assembly until he executes the assembly request or is readmitted during a private motion made by another Baron.

During the assembly, players vote on four motions as outlined on cards drawn from the assembly deck. Players receive votes proportional to the number of cities they control and how much money they have in their treasuries. The proposals include titles providing complimentary troops, concessions which generate income, Governorships and Ambassadorships which send a noble or Baron away for a period of time, but gives income at the same time; private motions, proposals made by a specific Baron; and a host of other miscellaneous proposals. The chairman conducts the proceedings, assigns titles and Ambassadorships to nobles within a faction and breaks tied votes. Although ties don't occur frequently, the appointment of nobles for titles is a point for negotiating favors, and the appointment of Ambassadorships is even more critical. Whenever a noble is appointed to be

an Ambassador, he must send all his mercenaries home. A good enough reason to walk out of the assembly. The player to the left of the Chairman is the Veto card holder. By playing his veto card, he can turn a "YES" decision into a "NO" decision, or may disqualify the winning candidate, in which case the vote is now won by the second place contestant. Assembly rounds can become very noisy, which is all part of the fun of *Warrior Knights*.

After the voting concludes, the Chairman resolves any trade fleets and may elect to charter a new trade fleet. A trade fleet allows players to invest Crowns on overseas investments. Three assembly rounds later, a die roll is made for trade fleets to determine if the shipment has been delayed, sunk, or pays off. The odds are favorable, but the time period in which one's money is tied up is long. Players are given the opportunity to resign an office in hopes of getting a better office next assembly, and new assembly cards are drawn for the next assembly.

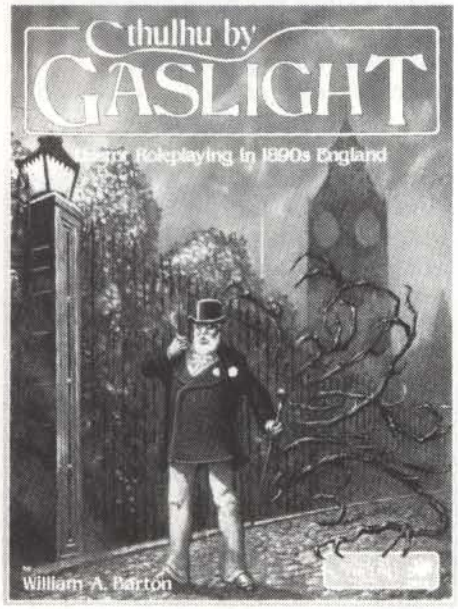
Warrior Knights is not a difficult game to learn. Game mechanics are simple to learn while playing, but it takes time to learn to budget mercenary bids and maintenance, and to prepare yourself against sneak attacks from other players. The resulting game system is one which allows for many strategies. For example, there are four special overseas cities which may be moved to from a player's stronghold. These cities don't aid in winning the game, providing assembly votes or town levies, but provide more income than "onboard" cities. To campaign for these cities and when to do so is a strategy issue which has no clear cut answer. Fate cards also provide "Forced March" and "Traitor in the City" cards which increase movement or allow town defenses to be nullified for a combat round. These are only some of the many facets to the game.

The only blemishes upon this game lie in some of the rules and event/assembly cards. The rules do not cover two critical situations. First, it is not made clear when exactly players check to determine when a siege has been broken. An event card may cause a player to lose troop strength needed in maintaining a siege. I've assumed that the siege is broken immediately, but the designer might have had something else in mind. The second rules dispute which presents problems is the raising and maintaining of garrisons. If the rules were interpreted literally, a player could raise a 1 million strength garrison and tear it down prior to having to pay maintenance. Because this is very unfair, we have altered the rules to state that maintenance is payed both at the time of raising a garrison (whenever a noble occupies a city) and during the maintenance round. A minor point which the rules fail to cover is the resolution of tied bids. Players may bid in increments of one-half crown yet there were several tied bids in our games. The method I devised was to have the participant in the tie bid a second time, minimum price being the amount that resulted in a tie. It is rumored that a second edition of *Warrior Knights* will be forthcoming, and that rule problems such as these will be corrected.

Playing time is 4-6 hours, which means *Warrior Knights* can be played in one evening, albeit a long one. The system is simple enough to attract players, and provides enough action to keep ones interest high, even if the fates have not been kind. I highly recommend the purchase of this game to, gamers who like multi-player games such as *Kingmaker* or *Borderlands*. Even at $24.00 you will still get your money's worth of entertainment.

Cthulhu by GASLIGHT

Shedding Light on Cthulhu?



Cthulhu by Gaslight
Published by: Chaosium, Inc.
Authorized by: Arkam House
Designer: William A. Barton
Price: $18.00
Complexity level: Moderate
Rules clarity: Good
Graphics Quality: Excellent
Reviewed by: Lisa Cohen

Finally, what I have been waiting for! A game with real mystery and horror all in one.

Cthulhu by Gaslight is a supplement for the game *Call of Cthulhu* that makes the game playable in the 1890's. Included in the game is a sourcebook for the 1890's, a module called the Yorkshire Horror, a map of London, and blank *Cthulhu by Gaslight* character sheets. The source book contains maps of London, a price list, a time line, a weapons list, time travel rules and new occupations for player characters. The module contains maps, statics on new monsters and new spells. The map comes complete with railroads and trails of underground passageways. The Cthulhu character sheets for *Gaslight* contains new skills acquired in the 1890's.

Being a bit of a mystery buff, I have always wrapped my own sense of mystery into the horrors of Cthulhu. Cthulhu, being a diverse and mind boggling game, allows for such things. Being also a afficionado of Sherlock Holmes and the late 19th century period of London, I was completely enthralled when I first set eyes on *Cthulhu by Gaslight*.

The sourcebook was very interesting. It is an item that is a must for 1890's adventuring in ANY game. The two big things I liked were the new character occupations and time travel. Some of the occupations were redundant and are found in the 1920's source book. They are explained in more detail, though, and are of a different era. There are at least four more new occupations such as adventuress, rogue, inquiring agent and consulting detective. Time travel was something else. At first I thought it was way out of context and too hokey for *Cthulhu*, but there are many good reasons to bring time travel into a game. The main reason it is in *Cthulhu by Gaslight* is so your 1920's character can visit the 1890's. There are three ways to time travel: by machine, gate and psionics. Machine is H. G. Wells idea in which the character rides a machine to different times Psionics is a lot more complicated and is a sort of mind travel. I particularly liked the time travel by gate where a character can create a gate that takes you to different times. There is a vast amount of information compiled in a small easy to read book to get you ready to adventure the 1890's. There is an index of biblographies the author read that you can also read for a more complete understanding of the times.

The module was another story literally! It started out with almost a bit of false advertising. I looked at the introduction believing that I actually would be adventuring with Sherlock Holmes but what did I see? A letter. All he does is send a letter for adventurers to come and help his brother. Maybe they figured Sherlock Holmes would be through the modules within 15 minutes because anyone else with intelligence would be. The module is cute but that is it. The module is good but it could be good in the 1920's as well as the 1890's. With all that the sourcebook has to offer, nothing of it really was used in the module. One last thing that really bugged me were the typos. Did they really think the game was so great that they had to stop the presses (literally) to get this out? Whole paragraphs are missing and words are misspelled.

So much for shedding Gaslight on *Cthulhu*.

Fragments of Fear

Fragments of Fear
Supplement to
Call of Cthulhu

Publisher: Chaosium, Inc.
Authors: Sandy Petersen, Bob Heggie, Lynn Willis, William James Hamblin III, Ph.D. et. al.
Illustrations by: Tom Sullivan
Map by: Carolyn Schultz
Price: $6.00
Complexity: Moderate
Rules clarity: Excellent
Graphics: Good
Reviewed by: Guy Hail

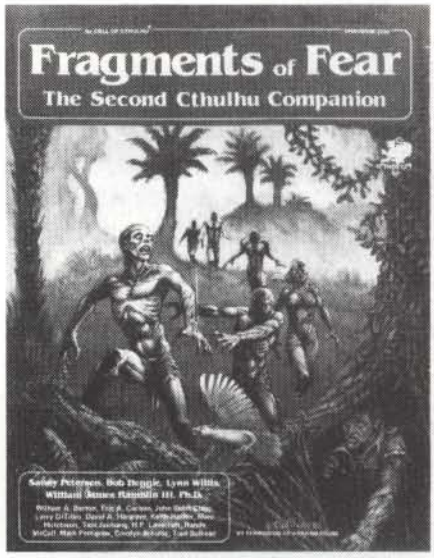
Fragments of Fear is Chaosium's supplement to second edition *Call of Cthulhu*. This 48 page supplement contains another literary treasure from Dr. Phileus P. Sadowsky's notes; a centerfold of Cthulhu entities; additional deities and servants from the works of J. Ramsey Campbell; one short and one long scenario; normal animals to encounter; a complete listing of spells from regular supplements; answers to questions Sandy Petersen has been asked repeatedly; and miscellany.

In the question and answer chapter Petersen explains reading Mythos tomes takes months because the authors badle hand-write obscure words, making occult and literary references unknown without further research. He answers the questions "How do I learn a language in *Cthulhu*?" "Why must my character lose multiple SAN for seeing multiple monsters?" and "Why can't my character get used to seeing common Mythos monsters?" His answer to the last question changed the way my group plays, and may change your ways as well.

A second excellent section of this supplement is the compilation of spells from the various Chaosium adventures and campaigns. Each spell is listed in alphabetical order with a summary of its use and effects, and notation indicating the first supplement the spell appeared in.

The list of spells in *Fragments of Fear* is not complete. Chaosium omitted one of my favorites from *Masks of Nyarlathotep: Strike blind*. Aside from this slip the supplement is better than the supplement to the first edition. The Sadowsky material is extremely fanciful and has thankfully been kept to entertaining length. There is a single page map of Innsmouth, statistics for Bast, Daoloth, Glaaki, Shans, and Xiclotlans, and a page of ritual curses from Gypsy magicians, the Pharaoh's priests, and the Pope, among others. The other miscellany here is offbeat or potentially useful.

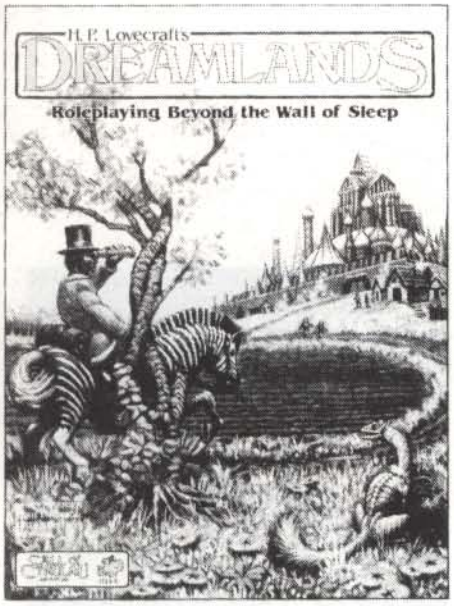
The shorter adventure is a rewrite of the adventure from *Different Worlds #19*, *"The Underground Menace."* It is a four page adventure suitable for novice investigators to learn the follies of tampering with arcane rituals and



supernatural powers. The second scenario, *"The Valley of the Four Shrines"* by Bob Heggie, has new spells, a new deity, a romantic African location, and a random encounter chart! In *"Valley"* the party follows the trail of an earlier expedition to the Belgian Congo and discovers an ancient canyon unvisited for several thousand years. The author's conception of the canyou, its city, and its inhabitants is imaginative and bizarre. A Keeper emphasizing the remoteness of the valley and harmlesness of its human inhabitants will stun the investigating party with the strangeness of the uninhabited city of the Great Race.

Chaosium has published a lightly flawed and reasonably priced supplement for the many feverish fans of *Call of Cthulhu*.

"SUCH IS THE STUFF..."



DREAMLANDS: A Supplement for Call of Cthulhu

Published by: Chaosium, Inc.
Designers: Sandy Petersen, K. L. Campbell Robson, Scott Clegg, et al.
Price: $25
Complexity level: Low
Rules clarity: Good
Graphics quality: Good
Reviewed by: J.Michael Caparula

It had to happen sooner or later. *Call of Cthulhu* is starting to become "old hat". That's right, coming face to face with horrors from Yuggoth and worse places gets boring after a while. *Call of Cthulhu* campaigns everywhere seem to be crying out for something beyond the predictability of the Cthulhu Mythos. The game needs something new and fresh to entice and exciteits players. I expected no less from *Call of Cthulhu's* first major supplement, *Dreamlands*. What I got was a whole lot more.

Based on the early fantasies of H. P. Lovecraft, themselves largely inspired by Lord Dunsany, *Dreamlands* enables investigators to explore and adventure in the mysterious world of dreams. Player characters may enter the Dreamlands during their sleep, or by way of powerful magic. Once there, two priests judge the investigator's worthiness to enter and travel the strange lands of sleep. The Dreamlands themselves may remind players of a typical fantasy setting, at least in terms of atmosphere and technology, but they hold many surprises. Visit the great seaport of Hlanith, or the hellish Forbidden Lands, or maybe the cat city of Ulthar. Dare to venture into the Underworld, where ghouls and gugs roam. The Dreamlands are a limitless place; space is easily traversed, and one may visit Dreamlands of the moon and beyond. Be warned! The Demon Court of Azathoth awaits on the fringes of the dream world.

Dreamlands is presented in a one-inch box containing two booklets, adventure handouts, and a wall map of the Dreamlands. The forty page sourcebook introduces the Dreamlands and the methods of gaining access to them. A fascinating new skill, Dreaming, allows investigators to alter or add to the Dreamlands' reality. Magic is prolific in the Dreamlands, and an extensive list of new spells is provided, most of which will not work in the waking world. A glossary of places and creatures sufficiently rounds out the book. The 72 page *Dream Journeys* provides the keeper with six excellent scenarios for use with the Dreamlands environment. All are good, but two deserve special attention. The lengthly *Bickman's Student* makes superb use of handouts and frightening shock effects in an advantage that walks the tightrope between dream and reality. *The Land of Lost Dreams* is a unique and demanding quest of self-discovery in which the players quite literally confront their own psyche.

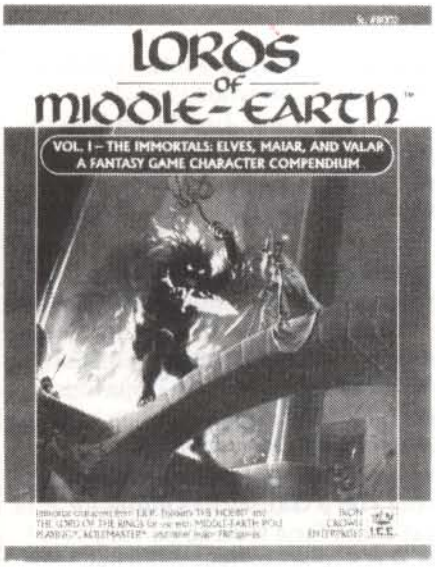
Beyond the adventures, *Dreamlands* opens up a vast new area of role-playing potential. Imagine running a campaign of two separate yet intertwining worlds, dreaming and waking. Other variations are possible: *start* an adventure in the dream world without letting the players know, then have them suddenly wake up! Or imagine your *RuneQuest* or *Stormbringer* players stumbling across the Dreamlands by some quirk of metaphysics.

LORDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH (Volume I: The Immortals)

Published by: Iron Crown Enterprises
Designers: Peter Fenlon, Terry Amthor, R. Mark Colborn, S. Coleman Charlton
Price: $12
Complexity level: Moderate
Rules clarity: Good
Graphics quality: Good
Reviewed by: J. Michael Caparula

This is the first in a trilogy of supplements intended to cover the complete cycle of colorful characters that have graced the history of Middle-Earth. It is intended primarily for ICE's *MERP* and *Rolemaster*, but could be incorporated into any fantasy campaign with ease. What's more, the depth of background material would please even the non-gaming Tolkien scholar.

The first volumn encompasses the immortal races, the Valar, Maiar, and Quendi (Elves). Later volumes will cover the Men and the "minor" races: Hobbits, Dwarves, Ents, and the like. The format is fairly straight-forward. Each chap-



ter commences with a lengthly essay covering the history and development of the race in question. This is followed by insight and speculation on their general character and personality. The bulk of the material consists of write-ups on individual characters, providing *MERP/Rolemaster* stats, short biographies, listings of personal items, special powers, and references to the original Tolkien books. All of the character stats are summarized on quick-reference charts. The volume concludes with a chapter on incorporating high-level characters into play.

This is truely what *MERP* players have been waiting for. They're all here: Gandalf, Saruman, Tom Bombadil, Elrond, Galadriel... even Sauron and The Balrog! ICE's emphasis in their previous supplements has been on places and geography; now at last we have a compendium on the true stars of Tolkien's creation, the characters themselves. The authors have also done a fair amount of extrapolation, including data on the two unnamed Istari and a plethora of invented Elves. I welcome this kind of free-handedness, because Middle-Earth is almost too well-defined to provide a flexible campaign world.

In the long run, however, this work is practically unusuable, given the extremely high levels of the characters. I don't expect to see the Valar and most Maiar walking around Endor interacting with the player-characters. Most of the Elves are from the First Age, and very few GM's set campaigns in that immutable time period. The tips on running high level PC's are, to my mind, absurd, because 100th level characters will drastically alter the working background of Middle-Earth, unless your campaign is set in the Fourth Age.

This all adds up to anticipation for the next two volumes. The format and amount of information here is terrific, but I'm anxious to see it applied to more down to earth types. I'd rather see my players encounter Faramir or Fatty Bolger than the likes of Ungoliant.

The Bestiary

Role-Playing Game supplement
Hero Games
Price: $8.00
Reviewed by Frank Jessie

Hero Games is developing a reputation for themselves, and *The Bestiary* conforms to this reputation good and bad. The people at Hero Games have had a problem with product presentation since their inception. Unfortunately, *The Bestiary is no exception.* The interior art, except for a few zoological illustrations, tends to be especially uninspiring.

But also in keeping with their reputation, the written content of this book proves to be of higher caliber than the art. After nearly passing it up, I glanced at the inside and saw it as a valuable tool. Although it is not transferable to other game systems, it works well in each of the *Hero Games*. It sports a special section detailing its uses and unique benefits for each genre. Also involving the use of these creatures in each of the different *Hero Games*, *The Bestiary* explains the reason behind the two methods of creature creation. One is used for *Fantasy Hero* and the other for *Champions, Danger International and Justice Inc.* This variation in rules is a simple discrepancy and is easily converted to suit any of the games.

Overall, *The Bestiary* is quite specific and well organized, with information easily accessible. They've covered many of the gray areas left by the individual game books. This is accomplished by the expanded sections on combat abilities, other abilities and disadvantages. Especially the animal size chart which displays the dimensions of each level of size increase and decrease, and the relative strength of creatures at these sizes.

This supplement also describes the difference between animals and humans, that is to say, their difference in motivation. Your players may be surprised to encounter a "monitor" which acts instinctively, as opposed to being guided by an intelligent entity. This section should help a gamemaster make encounters more than just a quick fight to the death, and encourage more inventive play from your adventurers. The specific fighting styles of different animals is supplied. The rear claw rake of a lion adds a frightening realism to the danger of what brave heroes routinely face out in that danger-filled world.

The rules for venom attack are a wonderful addition. Not only does it play realistically, but it allows a loophole to test a true hero. When bitten or stung, will the characters run and hide in order to save themselves? Or, will they pass on, knowing they are in danger? Unfortunately, the writers didn't include a very extensive list of which creatures use which venom strength.

Other pleasant surprises

include a write-up for Lovecraftian Demons, complete rules and suggestions are given for handling swarms, hordes, and stampedes, along with an entire section devoted to prehistoric threats from Tyrannosaurus to Eohippus. This section would prove a great boon to anyone running a Lost World based campaign.

For a change of pace, how about throwing your players up against a Godzilloid or a man-eating salad. The section on movie monsters offers several ideas and examples.

The concept of animal companions is only vaguely dealt with in the game books, but here it is handled appropriately, from skills for owners to special skills and disadvantages for the companions. An excellent example of these new rules is the telepathic link for those with familiars or psionic pets.

One of the strengths of the Hero Game System is that it supplies the system without forcing a campaign world on the players. They supply a world if you prefer, but due to the flexibility of the system, you can't start from scratch and enjoy the satisfaction of developing your own campaign world, power levels, and threats. *The Bestiary* reinforces this, while the list of animals and monsters is wide reaching, from Mammoth to river otter, and fairly extensive, it in no way limits play to what is listed. Maybe you've tired of your player characters yawing passively, safe in the knowledge that they are quick enough to avoid most damage. Well, juggle a few stats now and then and instead of underestimating the foe, they may approach situations with more caution. Or, maybe you'd prefer to create a dragon whose breath weapon runs out. Just build it using an END battery. In this manner your players are never sure of what they're facing.

The Bestiary is more than a monster manual. Any Game master worth their weight in dice, should feel the tingling of ideas. And this will most likely turn to impatience as the Game master waits to spring these surprises on those unsuspecting adventurers. One thing Hero Games has going for it is that their fans tend to be very loyal. So, in spite of the less than eye catching cover, the company's following will most likely seek it out. Upon sitting back and examining it, they should be satisfied as I was. I found *The Bestiary* makes up for its artistic flaws in superior writing and ideas.

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A Poor Man's Ultima

Shard of Spring:
Published by: Strategic Simulations Inc.
Designed by: Craig Roth and David Stark
Complexity level: Moderate
Rules clarity: Moderate
Reviewed by: Tim Bailey

Shard of Spring is a tactical scale, computer adventure game set on the mythical isle of Ymros, which is being terrorized by the evil witch Siriadne. the version reviewed is for the 64K *Apple II* series.

The aspect most immediately obvious about this game was it's similarity to *Ultima IV*, especially visually. The screen is divided up similarily, the figures and terrain are displayed in the same graphic block fashion, and data on the party is displayed similarly also. The magic system is slightly different, as is combat--but the games LOOK a lot alike.

The more I played this game, however, the more I began to appreciate its unique merits. The characters that make up your party are generated by the computer, but you have to have some say in rerolling low statistics, and there are racial modifiers applied to the statistics. The characters can choose among skills, and are allowed as many as they can afford with their intellect points. Some skills cost more points than others. This skill use and the system of magic and combat make game play interesting.

The fact that this game uses *Ultima* type overhead combat system, aside from it's glaring unoriginality, is otherwise beneficial, because it is a good system. This, added to a movement allowance for each character and monster that dictates how many times they may move or attack, makes combat the most eventful part of the game.

The magic system is built around five elements of nature: Fire, Metal, Wind, Ice, and Spirit. A wizard may choose to know as many of these areas as he can within the limits of his intellect, and once he knows an element, he may cast all of the spells contained within that element. My only problem is that beginning and intermediate level wizards quickly use up what spell points they have on tap, and it takes too long to recover points unless you spend loads of money sleeping at an inn. It usually ends up that enemy wizards can decimate your party if you are low on spell points because they just came from a nice, long sleep.

The cities on Ymros are simply boring. They consist of a list of the shoppes in the city, and you select the establishment you want by entering an assigned letter.

Unfortunately, there is not much more to this game than combat and dungeon wandering. Sometimes the frequency of combat in the wilderness is frustratingly frequent, and there are no safe routes to follow. When travelling, you develop a sense of when your next encounter will be, but there is no way to avoid it. There are no interesting side aspects such as city adventures, and such, at least not that I have discovered. The ultimate goal in this game is to retrieve the mystical Shard of Spring, and there are certain steps, (finding the ancient tombs, the royal seal, the keys, and ultimately Siriadne). These, however, are only to be guessed at in the beginning. What I really hate is running up against "shimmering walls" or "locked doors" that my characters seem too stupid to do anything to but walk away from.

Now on to my other beef about this game: the enclosed rulebook supplied with the game serves adequately in its task of explaining the various commands and details of combat, but no maps (even rough ones) are given, and this would be useful during game play. The lack of knowledge of the general geography by characters seems unlikely, given that Ymros seems to be a small but moderately populated island. Another place where information is strangely, and annoyingly, absent is the function of magic items. These are not really described by their names, but the wizards who know the precise name of an item are still ignorant of its function. These are both indicative of the rulebook itself which also comes across as somewhat short of points of interest or information pertaining to your quest. This reflects the relative drabness of gameplay, although the designers still managed to pack quite a bit onto two disks.

In closing, I must say that I am not severely unhappy with this game, but somewhat disappointed. There are some flaws which cannot be overlooked, such as the use of *Ultima Iv*'s mechanics, and this really does distract somewhat from the game's credibility. However, if you have the money to spare, and *Ultima IV* is not available, and you can't wait, *Shard of Spring* is a good, but inferior imitation.

BASEBALL FEVER

Catch it... with your own... COMPUTER BASEBALL LEAGUE

by Robbie Robertson

As baseball season gets into full swing, the average fan is already planning to enjoy America's favorite pasttime, what with season tickets, satellite television, and a rousing chorus of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during the seventh inning stretch. But for those of us who want to get a little more enjoyment out of pennant races and vital statistics, our trusty computers will help make this baseball season all the more exciting.

GETTING STARTED

The first important ingredient in forming a league is dedication. Any successful league will consist of a core of dedicated, hard-core baseball fans who will stick it out to the bitter end, even if it means their team is in last place. If you and your friends are the kind whose interest lags after a few games, then setting up a league would only be a waste of your time.

How many teams should be in a league? As many as you can get. The more there are, the more realistic (and fun) the league will be. However, if your league consists of less than twenty six teams, don't be disappointed. Smaller leagues will function better and quicker and probably be less tiresome over the long grueling season. Our group, the Cactus League, consists of six players, but we still have a great time.

Another consideration is the type of program and computer you will be using to play. Obviously, the more computers available, the easier it will be to set up series between players and to keep the season flowing. Along the same lines, if the same computers and/or software can be used, then potential conflicts can be avoided and every team assured of experiencing what every other team has. No one wants to have to face the accusation that one particular program favored his team over another.

THE GROUND RULES

Next, you will have to set up some basic rules covering the operation of the league. They should cover issues such as how many games are to be played, scheduling of games between players, and how many divisions the league will have (this last one will depend on the number of players you have). More importantly, will be how you address the composition of the athletes in the league. How many players will each team be allowed to have? How many pitchers and how many batters? Will a player with a low number of at bats be allowed to play as much as someone who was a regular? Not many of these questions may seem relevant at first, but as the league develops, the questions are going to come up when a situation begins to be taken advantage of.

As an example, in the Cactus League, we have tried to adhere to Major League Baseball rules as much as possible. Each team carries a 40 man roster, with fifteen on the reserve list and twenty-five on the active roster. Moving players between the two lists is limited (three a season) to prevent players from shuttling back and forth in order to gain an advantage over those whose staff isn't as deep as an opponent's. Players are allowed to bat as many times as they did in real life (the previous season), and, once they reach that number, may not be used any more. The same goes for pitchers, using their 'innings pitched' statistic.

You will not be able to cover every possible problem or eventuality that may come up, but with careful thinking, you should avoid major problems that may pop up. It would be also wise to have league meetings throughout the first season of play to settle any problems or disputes that may come up or to vote in new rules that are needed. Cactus League has several meetings over the year, off-season as well as a 'All-Star Break' meeting to keep everything under control.

THE DRAFT

The next step is to get some players. A draft can be the most exciting part of league play, or it can be the disastrous end to the league itself. It must be a fair draft, to allow everyone the opportunity

to get the players that will make the league competitive. If one or two players are allowed to hog all the talent, it will be a very boring league for the others involved. Somebody will have to pick first and someone will have to pick last, but the process should allow everyone to pick first several times in the draft rounds.

Another alternative is what the Cactus League did to keep one team from becoming an All-Star team. Simply assign a random number that each player must roll under on a percentile dice (like 80 or 85%) in order to secure that player. If he fails the roll, the team can never attempt to draft that player again during the initial draft. Other players still have the chance to gain the player and some equality is preserved over the long run.

Drafts should be made with an eye to what strategy you are pursuing. Should you draft good pitchers or good batters? Young, relatively unproven players or the reliable, older veterans? Fast speedy players, or the slower power hitters? Home run kings, or singles hitters? Obviousely everyone will have their own tastes and whims to pursue, which will make for an interesting season. The person who will have the most successful draft is the one who has studied all the available players and their career records, and not simply pick the players who had one good season (and carry no guarantee of having another).

Of course, as a new baseball season begins, everyone will want to draft new players, which should be limited in scope to prevent a player from completely getting rid of his lousy team for a new one. The Cactus League has seven drafts per year. Five at the beginning of the season and two at the All-Star break, to help teams catch up that are falling behind in the dust. Otherwise teams will have to rely on the shrewdness of their managers to make the trades they need to keep their teams in the running.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

Once play gets underway, again the key factor is dedication. It is important to play the games as scheduled. If players begin to lag behind, it will serve only to disrupt the league and eventually bring it to an end. A firm word to those involved should correct the problem, especially if these same players have rosters of good players that would hate to be forfeited.

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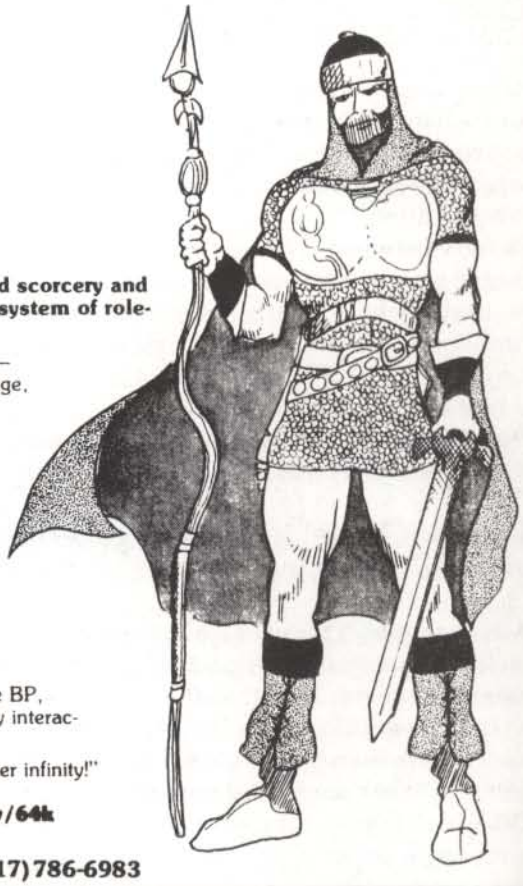

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Circle Reader Service # 12

Software To Get You Started

Here are a few programs recommended for setting up a computer baseball league. Each have their advantages and disadvantages, so the best one for your league's needs will depend entirely on the members views.

Computer Baseball: The first generation baseball program.

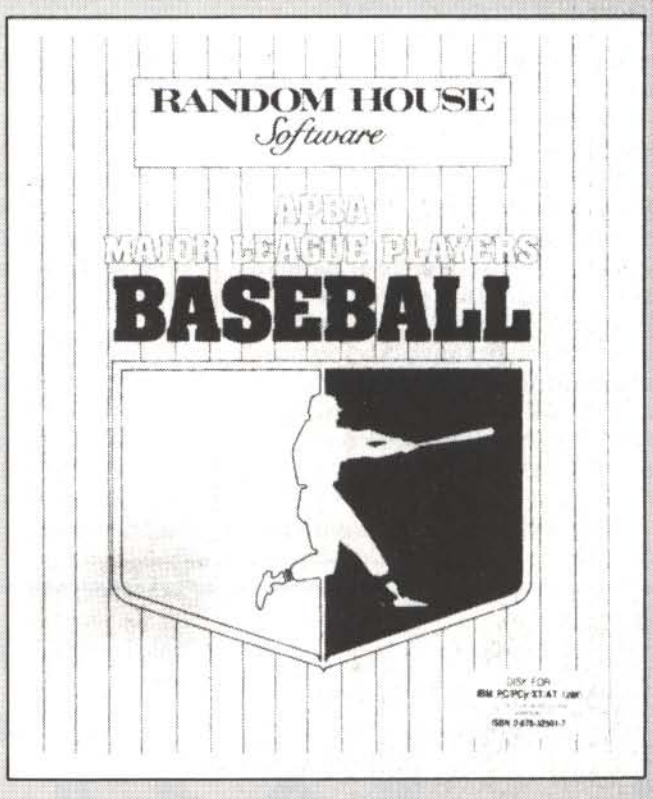
Advantages: Allows for players statistics to be entered and thus the ability to create custom teams. Also the option to enter the number of innings pitched and days of rest for pitchers, thus making a pitching rotation necessary. Box scores are available at the end of each game.
Disadvantages: Limited graphics make for dismal viewing, even on the Amiga version. Some vital statistics such as saves for relief pitchers are ignored. And a limited manager control for offensive strategy. Some earlier versions had minor bugs, so beware.
Publisher: Strategic Simulations, Inc. For Apples, MacIntosh, Commodore, Atari, IBM PC and Amiga - $14.95.

Micro League Baseball: Second generation baseball program.

Advantages: A more complete statistical base allows for realism. Optional disks for creating new teams and compiling game results make for easier league organization. Good graphics and animation keeps the interest alive.
Disadvantages: To be able to use this program for league play will set you back about $80 for three separate disks. Unsatisfactory control over base-runners, who try to stretch singles into triples a little too often. Lack of an option for pitcher rotation and errors in the stat compiler program.
Publisher: Micro League Sports Association. For Apples, and Commodore. Game disk - $40.

Pro-Stat Baseball: Third generation baseball program.

Advantages: This uses statistics from all angles, including batters' averages facing left and right-handed pitchers. Also the effects of certain stadiums on the player (like windy Wrigley) are also included. Four or five man pitching rotation option available, along with box scores and compiler.
Disadvantages: Cannot enter own statistics. You must buy a season disk in order to create personal teams. Must also buy stadium disk to have all twenty-six major stadiums included.
Publisher: SubLogic Corporation. For Apples and Commodore. Game disk - $50.



APBA Baseball: Third generation baseball game, based on the popular tabletop game.

Advantages: Uses a wide variety of statistics and a high degree of managerial control to effectively re-create a season over the long run.
Disadvantages: No graphics; results are recorded on the text screen. As with Pro-Stat Baseball, you must rely on separate season disks for individual teams.
Publisher: APBA Game Company, Inc. For Apples with 128K, IBM. Game disk and one season's statistics - $60.

These are not the only baseball programs available. Several others are either unsuitable for re-creating league play or have not been released at the time this article was written. The main thing to keep in consideration, before buying any new program, is whether or not you will be allowed to create your own original teams and to the extent the program relies on player's statistics rather than hand-eye coordination.

the league developing is what I call the 'frills' or 'chrome'. Basically, they are little, trivial things that may not seem important, but go a long way to keeping the interest level high and morale up. A perpetual trophy is one such 'frill'. This gives something for everyone to aim for, if not this season, the next one for sure. And of course it will be a way of keeping a permanent record of who was the league champion for every year played. Another way would be to have a victory dinner at your favorite eating establishment with the winner's meal being paid for by the rest of the participants. Still another way to make the season interesting is for everyone to chip in five thousand dollars at the beginning of the year, and the winning team collects the pot at the close of the season.

Another example of a 'frill' would be what one member of our Cactus League does. Every year he has gone out and purchased a complete set of baseball trading cards for the league. This way each member can have a set of cards of his players, with the statistics and picture of his players. The card makes it easier to keep track of the less famous players and be able to recognize them on television when you are following that hot young rookie.

Besides 'frills', what you really need to keep things moving smoothly is organization. A secretary to keep the records of wins and losses within the league, and to take minutes of the meetings and to keep the current rosters and statistics up to date is essential. Not only will arguments be avoided, if there is a central record keeper, but it will make it easier to look up required data needed for any rules you may have initiated or to get the latest roster changes because of trades, sending players up, or injuries.

PLAY BALL!

Now that you have your appetite whetted for some action, get some of your friends, who are just as fanatical about baseball as yourself, and get the league going. It's never too late to start, and once you do, you will be glad you did. *Space Gamer /Fantasy Gamer* would be interested in hearing from those who have started a league or played in one with their comments and observations. The best ones will be re-printed here in the Computer Games section. Drop us a note here at the magazine and ask for the writer's guidelines.

If you live in the greater Los Angeles area and are interested in joining a league, contact us, and we can maybe help you out.

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This month is the debut of a column on science fiction and fantasy books. In addition to short reviews of upcoming releases, future columns will also feature books that can be easily adopted to gaming campaigns.

Reviews by Lynn Bryant

ANOTHER FINE MYTH

by Robert Lynn Asprin
Published by Donning/Starblaze and Ace SF

There are likely to be a few readers unaware of Bob Asprin's "Myth" series. Back in 1978 when the first of these books *Another Fine Myth*, appeared, there was a maxim among publishers that humor and fantasy didn't mix. Therefore, we never read any humorous fantasy. Almost singlehandedly this series changed the face of the bookstore shelves. They were a near instant hit and with good reason. Every myth book is most irreverent, different from anything else you've read and very, very funny.

The basic characters are Skeeve and Aahz. Skeeve is an apprentice magician who lives in the universe of *Klah*, making him a *Klahd*. Aahz is a "demon" who originates in *Perv*, making him a *Pervert*, um,... That's Perfect. Aahz may also be described as being an opportunist. That is, if you describe Attila as being slightly unpleasant. In each book these two, and assorted associates find themselves in impossible situations and triumph in some amazing and enjoyable ways.

The humor in the Myth series isn't limited to just puns or punch lines. The situations manage to be outrageous without degenerating into slapstick, and the dialogue is often inspired (by Asprin's own wicked sense of humor). There is a bizarre in which you would love to game, and a number of very cogent observations on the universe. *(Mayfair is coming out with a game based on this)* These books are just plainly well written. If they had been done as straight adventures, they would still be good reading. In each one, Bob Asprin tells an exciting tale and gives us characters for which we care.

If you find this praise hard to believe, it is suggested that you start with the first one and read on. Editions of these books are published by both Ace SF and Starblaze Books. There are seven Myth books currently available and the eighth, *Myth-nomer and Impervections* is scheduled for this fall. In this adventure Skeeve actually journeys to the mysterious and often malodorous *Perv*.

Highly recommended for anyone who has a sense of humor, or needs to develop one.

THE REGIMENT

by John Dalmas

published by Baen Books

Baen Books has a number of excellent military/science fiction authors writing for it. Among these are David Drake, Janet Morris, and Jerry Pournelle. It now appears John Dalmas joined the ranks.

The regiment is a mercenary regiment from a planet where the chief export is mercenaries. If this sounds familiar, the handling of the concept is most different. The hero, a reporter, manages to join the regiment as their publicist, specifically he joins the Red Scorpion regiment of the Lodge of Kootosh-Lan. They have been hired to put down rebels on a planet containing vital resources. A planet covered by jungle and where on a cool day the temperature reaches 130 degrees in the shade.

There is plenty of action as the reporter joins one unit on several missions. In doing so, he learns about their philosophy, which provides not only a major element of the novel, but also a major clue to the mystery he uncovers. The mystery being: who is behind the rebels and why? The solution being reasonable, logical, and hard to guess. On the way we also learn a good deal about a future civilization that has been consciously designed for stability, at the cost of flexibility.

The Regiment is a good read. It is a long book that could have benefited by being a bit shorter, but the prose reads easily and while Dalmas could have packed in more battles, there is plenty of action. If you are looking for a good militarily oriented story that challenges you to think, you'll enjoy this book.

DRAGONHARPER

in Anne McCaffrey's world of Pern
by Jody Lynn Nye

A *Crossroads Adventure*
from TOR Books

It had to happen. Chosen path books have now been around for over a decade. At first they were aimed at younger readers, but recently they have grown quite sophisticated. Now there comes a whole series designed for older readers. This is the *Crossroads* gamebooks which consist of authorized adventures set in well known science fiction and fantasy worlds.

If *Dragonharper* is an example, these books are meant to be read as well as played. If you don't normalmally "play" the chosen path books, you may want to get them and "read" the story. The quality of writing in all three of the books is impressively high.

Dragonharper is the tale of Masterharper Robinton's trip to Benden Hold. The harper is eighteen at the time of this adventure. Along the journey, the young Harper encounters a variety of hazards. The adventure ends with his arrival at Benden Weyr just in time for a hatching.

Robinton encounters an impressive number of challenges, some very real dangers, and more than one pretty lass. Pern fans will be impressed with the wealth of detail. Especially enjoyable was the glimpses of several familiar Pern characters in their younger days.

If you want the gaming challenge even if you normally avoid chosen path novels as being too young, or just want an enjoyable book to read, *Dragonharper* is highly recommended. If the other books in this series are up to the standard of this one, they will be *must* reading for gamers and science fiction fans alike.

ARCHER'S GOON

by Diana Wynne Jones

published by Berkley Books

And you thought *you* had family problems. The Sykes home has had an invasion from a collections enforcer, clearly other than human. The goon isn't such a bad fellow to have around the house, as long as you do what his employer wants you to. Humphrey Sykes won't!

The human characters are slightly larger than life, pleasantly original, and beautifully drawn. Awful, the younger sister, is all of the horrible children you've ever met rolled into one, and proud of it. Howard is the bemused elder brother who hates music practice and designs spaceships in his spare time. No one is all evil or all good. The story draws you in, until the ordinary neighborhood you were in when it began, changes to one which is extraordinary and frightening, where it isn't possible for everyone to live happily ever after.

Well written and original, a gripping read.

IN WHICH WIZARD AND APPRENTICE GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SEEK A MISSING CITY
A NIGHT IN THE NETHERHELLS
The long-awaited conclusion to the Ebenezum trilogy!
Craig Shaw Gardner

A NIGHT IN THE NETHERALLS

by Craig Shaw Gardner

published by Ace Books

This is the third in the series about Ebenezum, the wizard with a severe allergy to magic that prevents him from casting any of his own spells and his apprentice Wuntvor.

Their previous adventures appeared in *A Malady of Magicks* and *A Multitude of Monsters*. These books should be read prior to this one since they make up a continuing saga.

In this, volume three, they finally reach *Vushta*, city of a thousand delights, only to find that the evil demon, Guxx Unfufadoo, has been there prior to their arrival. On hand once more are Sparks the demon, Hendrek the warrior, and the vaudeville team of Damsel and Dragon. There is an addition to this cast in the presence of the squeamish, magical sword, Cuthbert.

It is an amusing romp, in which it is demonstrated that the Netherhells isn't such a bad place to call home (if you're a demon), and that progress cheapens the good things in life. Good tongue in cheek fantasy.

KNIGHT LIFE

by Peter David

published by Ace Books

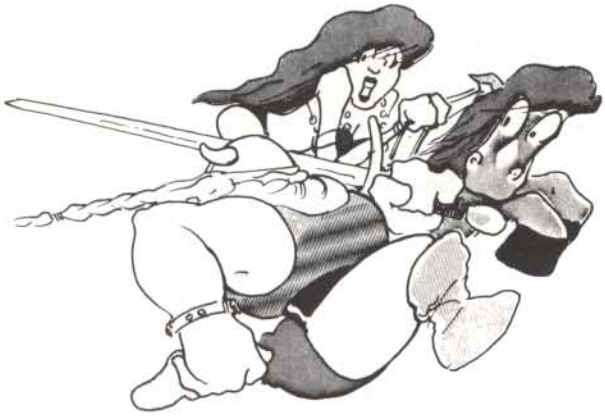
Another lousy story about King Arthur. No. This one is different. It's funny! It's witty! It's clever! It's New York???

Merlin has continued to age backwards until now he's a crotchety 1,600 year old wizard in the body of an eight year old boy. He is helping Arthur to move back into power, beginning by trying to get him elected to the office of mayor of New York. There are handfuls of unlikely characters, such as Arthur's official canvassers who are a couple of oddly consistent burnouts from the sixties that live in cardboard boxes in Central Park.

The only problem with reading *Knight Life* is that afterward, you wish that it could really happen. An enjoyable, quick read that will make you laugh out loud.

RULES MURPHY'S

By Tim Callender



In THE FANTASY TRIP (Steve Jackson Games) a character running at travel speeds can keep pace with a horse.

-Joseph Zaepfel

In TSR's STAR FRONTIERS an average person throwing a grenade can hit a large immobile object 20 feet away no more than one time in four.

-Doug Traversa

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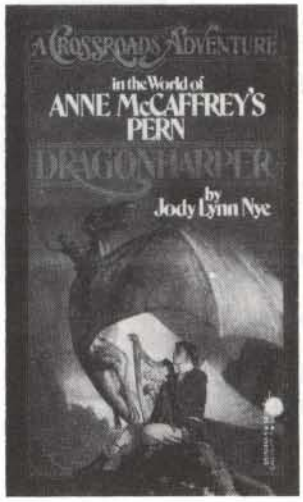

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1.__ Editorial
2.__ Scanner
3.__ Letters
4.__ BattleMech
5.__ HIL Sector Blues
6.__ Road Striker
7.__ Traveller: 2300
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9.__ Alone Against the Final Frontier
10.__ Silicon Solution
11.__ Talisman
12.__ GURPS
13.__ Warrior Knights
14.__ Shedding Light on Cthulhu
15.__ Fragments of Fear
16.__ Dreamlands
17.__ Lords of Middle Earth
18.__ The Beastiary
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22.__ **ISSUE OVERALL**

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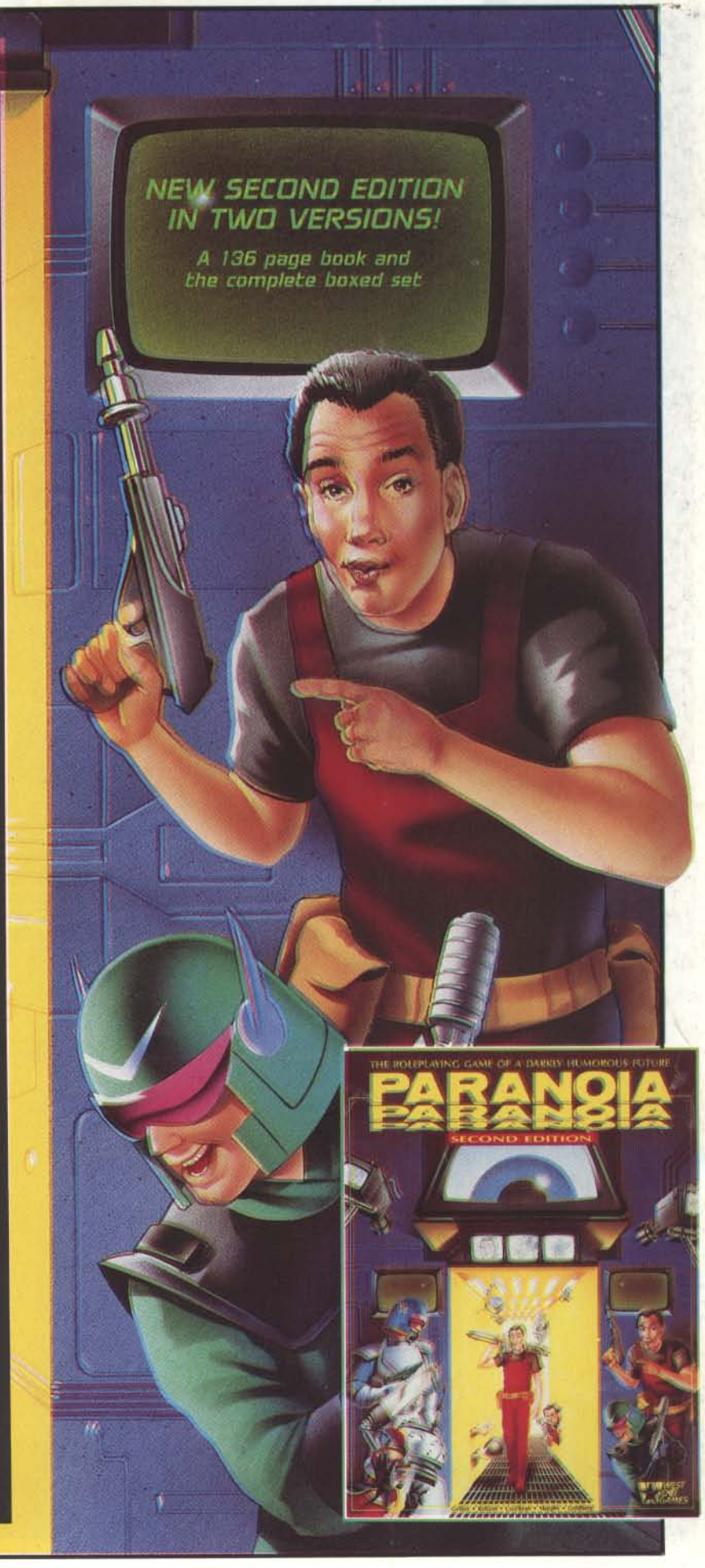
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